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ENGLISH SONNETS.





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ENGLISH SONNETS

BY

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SELECTED AND ARRANGED, WITH A NOTE ON THE

HISTORY OF THE 'SONNET' BY

SAMUEL WADDINGTON



'Laborum dulce lenimen.'—HOR.

LONDON : GEORGE BELL AND SONS
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TO

B. D.

THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY

Dedicated.

PREFACE.



HERE have been two Selections of English Sonnets published during recent years,—one by Mr. John Dennis, the other by Mr. Main,—but neither of these anthologies has included the sonnets of living writers. It is hoped, therefore, that this volume may not only serve as a supplement to these, but may also enable readers, and students of poetry, to compare the work of the poets of our own time with that of the many generations which have passed away since the Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt wrote the first English sonnets. It were hardly to be expected that the work of one generation should, both as regards number and execution, rival that of all its predecessors, but it is for the reader to judge for himself whether such is not almost the case in the present instance. With reference to the

number it may be observed that whereas Mr. Dennis's Selection included two hundred, and Mr. Main's nearly five hundred sonnets, this volume only contains one hundred and seventy-eight, but the Editor alone is to be blamed for this,—if any blame be due,—as by admitting others of a less high class and character, the number could easily have been raised to five hundred, or more. And he would take this opportunity of apologizing to many sonneteers whose work has, from various causes, been either omitted altogether, or but inadequately represented, in order that the plan, or intention, with which the selection was commenced, might not be departed from.

It is not, however, to the number,—nor yet to the execution, the movement and progress in word-painting,—that the attention of the reader should be especially called ; but to the substance, the thought, the doubts and difficulties, the passionate longings for a larger knowledge, the 'hunger and thirst after' the Unknown and, perhaps, Unknowable,—which form the lava out of which so many of these intaglios are carved. The first of modern critics has told us that "the strongest part of our religion to-day is

its unconscious poetry," and, perhaps it may be permitted us to reverse the sentence, and add, that the strongest part of our poetry to-day is its unconscious religion. There have been periods in the history of the world's literature during which the poet has, in a measure, been satisfied so long as he was

Δεδαηκότος μὲν εἰπεῖν
Χαριέντως δὲ μανῆναι.—

'skilled, indeed, to sing, and gracefully be mad : '—but the modern poet, the poet of the nineteenth century with its higher civilization and more extended culture, must, as Coleridge has pointed out, have both 'tender warmth at his heart,' and 'sound sense in his brains.' And this would appear to be especially the case as regards the 'sonnet,'—a form so admirably adapted as a tablet on which to inscribe the divine 'pensées,' the momentary flashes of light, the clear vision and deeper insight into the sacred mysteries of the infinite world around him, that visit unbidden the inspired mind of the poet and prophet.

It will be remarked that the selection has not been

restricted to examples of the so-called 'legitimate' sonnet, a term applied to the form, or variation of the form, which Guittone d'Arezzo originated, which Petrarch and Dante adopted as their model, and which of recent years, we know not for what reason, has been considered by some writers as the only 'correct' form of the Sonnet. One has but to mention the names of Shakspeare, Spenser, Keats, and Shelley, to justify this catholicity in selection; and, indeed, it would be sufficient to point out that some of the most beautiful sonnets in this volume,—those of Mrs. Fanny Kemble for instance,—are not written in the Guittonian form.

And now it remains for the Editor to thank very heartily many coadjutors for the valuable assistance they have rendered him: and especially to thank the authors who have so readily and graciously permitted their sonnets to be printed in this volume.

It may, perhaps, be well to mention that a few,—a very few,—sonnets by American writers whose poems have been published in England, and are therefore, as it were, naturalized, have been included. In order not to unwittingly offend any author by placing him at 'the very end'

of the volume, the Editor has ventured to conclude the selection with two of his own hitherto unpublished sonnets. He has also appended a short note on the Sonnet's history and composition.

47, CONNAUGHT STREET,
HYDE PARK, W.
October, 1880.

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ENGLISH SONNETS.

THE SINGER'S PLEA.



WHY do I sing? I know not why, my friend ;
The ancient rivers, rivers of renown,
A royal largess to the sea roll down,
And on those liberal highways nations send
Their tributes to the world,—stored corn and wine,
Gold-dust, the wealth of pearls, and orient spar,
And myrrh, and ivory, and cinnabar,
And dyes to make a presence-chamber shine.
But in the woodlands, where the wild-flowers are,
The rivulets, they must have their innocent will,
Who all the summer hours are singing still,
The birds care for them, and sometimes a star,
And should a tired child rest beside the stream
Sweet memories would slide into his dream.

EDWARD DOWDEN.



STOOD beside a pool, from whence ascended,
Mounting the cloudy platforms of the wind,
A stately heron ; its soaring I attended,
Till it grew dim, and I with watching blind—
When lo ! a shaft of arrowy light descended
Upon its darkness and its dim attire ;
It straightway kindled then, and was afire,
And with the unconsuming radiance blended.
And bird, a cloud, flecking the sunny air,
It had its golden dwelling 'mid the lightning
Of those empyreal domes, and it might there
Have dwelt for ever, glorified and bright'ning,
But that its wings were weak—so it became
A dusky speck again, that *was* a winged flame.

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH.

SNOW IN MARCH.



USING upon the ministry of pain,
To whet the edge of joy by suffering,
I walked upon a fitful day of spring ;
Even as I said, " Short sunshine after rain,
And then the heavy clouds are black again,"
Lo, riding on the east wind's dusky wing,
The haggard queen of snows came travelling,
To smirch the sunset with her funeral train
Of watery yellow dulled with ashen grey,
Which wrapt the bleak plain country up from sight ;
But ere the setting of that chill spring day
Bare trees pierced through her skirt of tearful light ;
Yet in its shadow, as it passed away,
The fruitful hills were stained a livid white.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SIMCOX.

MARI MAGNO.



MET Love on the waters, and I said :
‘ Lord, tell thy servant if the fault be mine
Or his alone, that we who once were thine,
Now daily further from thy face are led ! ’
‘ I blame you both, ’ Love answered ; ‘ You who read
The book of self-deception line by line,
Loving yourself, and fearing not to twine
Poisonous passion-flowers around his head :
Him, too, I blame because he was too weak
To shun your evil and to choose your good,
Too soft to serve you in the hour of need.
Thus, then, I pass the sentence which you seek :
Love’s higher law you still misunderstood ;
And love, for him, was but a wayside weed. ’

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

LOVE, THE MUSICIAN.



LOVE is the Minstrel ; for in God's own sight,
 The master of all melody, he stands,
 And holds a golden rebeck in his hands,
 And leads the chorus of the saints in light ;
 But ever and anon those chambers bright
 Detain him not, for down to these low lands
 He flies, and spreads his musical commands,
 And teaches men some fresh divine delight.
 For with his bow he strikes a single chord
 Across a soul, and wakes in it desire
 To grow more pure and lovely, and aspire
 To that ethereal country where, outpoured
 From myriad stars that stand before the Lord,
 Love's harmonies are like a flame of fire.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

THE SUN GOD.



SAW the Master of the Sun. He stood
High in his luminous car, himself more bright;
An Archer of immeasurable might:

On his left shoulder hung his quivered load;
Spurned by his Steeds the eastern mountain glowed;
Forward his eager eye, and brow of light
He bent; and while both hands that arch embowed,
Shaft after shaft pursued the flying Night.
No wings profaned that godlike form; around
His neck high held an ever-moving crowd
Of locks hung glistening; while such perfect sound
Fell from his bowstring, that th' ethereal dome
Thrilled as a dewdrop; and each passing cloud
Expanded, whitening like the ocean foam.

AUBREY DE VERE.

MONTENEGRO.



THEY rose to where their sovran eagle sails,
They kept their faith, their freedom, on the
height,
Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day and night
Against the Turk ; whose inroad nowhere scales
Their headlong passes, but his footstep fails,
And red with blood the Crescent reels from fight
Before their dauntless hundreds, in prone flight
By thousands down the crags and thro' the vales.
O smallest among peoples ! rough rock-throne
Of Freedom ! warriors beating back the swarm
Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,
Great Tsernogora ! never since thine own
Black ridges drew the cloud and brake the storm
Has breathed a race of mightier mountaineers.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

DIVIDED LIVES.



LIVES beloved, wherein mine once did live,
Thinking your thoughts, and walking in your
ways,
On your dear presence pasturing all my days,
In pleasantness, and peace ; whose moods did give
The measure to my own ! how vainly strive
Poor Fancy's fingers, numb'd by time, to raise
This vail of woven years, that from my gaze
To hide what now you are doth still contrive !
Dear lives, I marvel if to you yet clings
Of mine some colour ; and my heart then feels
Much like the ghost of one who died too young
To be remember'd well, that sometimes steals
A family of unsad friends among
Sighing, and hears them talk of other things.

ROBERT, EARL LYTTON.

AUTUMNAL SONNET.



OW Autumn's fire burns slowly along the woods,
And day by day the dead leaves fall and melt,
And night by night the monitory blast
Wails in the key-hole, telling how it pass'd
O'er empty fields, or upland solitudes,
Or grim wide wave ; and now the power is felt
Of melancholy, tenderer in its moods
Than any joy indulgent summer dealt.
Dear friends, together in the glimmering eve,
Pensive and glad, with tones that recognize
The soft invisible dew in each one's eyes,
It may be, somewhat thus we shall have leave
To walk with memory, when distant lies
Poor earth, where we were wont to live and grieve.

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

KEATS.



ARE voice, the last from vernal Hellas sent,
And fresh Arcadian hills, why mute so soon?
Did the Gods grudge their unexpected boon,
And Phœbus envy back the lute he lent?
So sudden came thy song, so sudden went!
O well for thee—free of life's fiery noon,
Free as a fairy underneath the moon,
But ill for us bereft of ravishment.
Not for our skies, piper of Grecian breed,
Nor suits our autumn melody with spring's;
So hast thou fled on bright ethereal steed
With all thy young and rich imaginings
To be great-hearted Homer's Ganymede,
Nor dropped one feather of thy shining wings.

ERASMUS HENRY BRODIE.

THE BURIAL OF THE POET.



IN the old churchyard of his native town,
And in the ancestral tomb beside the wall,
We laid him in the sleep that comes to all,
And left him to his rest and his renown.
The snow was falling, as if Heaven dropped down
White flowers of Paradise to strew his pall ;—
The dead around him seemed to wake, and call
His name, as worthy of so white a crown.
And now the moon is shining on the scene,
And the broad sheet of snow is written o'er
With shadows cruciform of leafless trees,
As once the winding-sheet of Saladin
With chapters of the Koran ; but, ah ! more
Mysterious and triumphant signs are these !

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

LOVE WITHOUT SYMPATHY.



YES, I will blame thy very height of heart,
I will conjure thee to remember still
That things above us are not less apart,
And mountains nearest to the sun most chill !
Well hadst thou held sublime and separate rank,
Martyr or heroine of romantic times,
When Woman's life was one poor cloudy blank,
Lit by rare-gleaming virtues, loves, and crimes.
But now that every day for thee and me
Has its own being of delight and woe,
Come down, bright Star! from thy perennial vault,
My earthly path's companion-light to be ;
And I will love thee more for every fault
Than for perfections that the angels show.

RICHARD, LORD HOUGHTON.



RUST me in all, for all my will is thine
To serve thee in all things most faithfully ;
Thy henchman, asking for no nobler fee
Than that same trust, which I repay with mine.

Trust me, but trust me not as aught divine ;
Trust me with eyes wide open to all ill,
Giving thy faith, but keeping fast thy will,
Lest in one evil scheme we both combine.
Trust me as honest, knowing I am weak,
Stronger, but yet as much in need of aid,
Losing no step thro' faith, and not afraid
To say, ' We shall not find there what we seek.'
Lean on me, love, but not so utterly
That if I stumble, thou shouldst helpless be.

COSMO MONKHOUSE.

THE OLD FISHER.



THOU art a fisher of Mazorbo ; lone,
Drifting a usual shadow o'er the sea,
With thine old boat, that, like a barkless tree,
Creaks in the wind, a pitchless dreary moan ;
And there thy life and all thy thoughts have flown,
Pouncing on crabs in shallows, till thy knee,
Crooked as theirs, now halts unsteadily,
Going about to move the anchor-stone ;
And when the waves roll inward from the east,
Takest thy net, and for some few sardines
Toil'st in the morning's wild and chilly ray ;
Then dost thou go to where yon bell-tower leans,
And in the sunshine sit, the poor man's feast,
Else abstinent in thy poverty, all the day.

JOHN, LORD HANMER.

THE BROOK.



BROOK, happy brook, that glidest through my
dell ;

That trippest with soft feet across the mead ;

That, laughing on, a mazy course dost lead,

O'er pebble beds, and reeds, and rushy swell ;

Go by that cottage where my love doth dwell.

Ripple thy sweetest ripple, sing the best

Of melodies thou hast ; lull her to rest

With such sweet tales as thou dost love to tell.

Say, "One is sitting in your wood to-night,

O maiden rare, to catch a glimpse of you ;

A shadow fleet, or but a window-light,

Shall make him glad, and thrill his spirit through."

Brook, happy brook, I pray, go lingering ;

And underneath the rosy lattice sing.

THOMAS ASHE.

QUIET WORK.



ONE lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson, which in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties kept at one,
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity—

Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity !
Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplish'd in repose—
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry !

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's senseless uproar mingling with his toil,
Still do thy quiet ministers move on,

Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting !
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

AUSTERITY OF POETRY.



HAT son of Italy who tried to blow,
Ere Dante came, the trump of sacred song,
In his light youth amid a festal throng
Sate with his bride to see a public show.

Fair was the bride, and on her front did glow
Youth like a star ; and what to youth belong,
Gay raiment, sparkling gauds, elation strong.
A prop gave way ! crash fell a platform ! lo,

Mid struggling sufferers, hurt to death, she lay !
Shuddering, they drew her garments off—and found
A robe of sackcloth next the smooth, white skin.

Such, poets, is your bride, the Muse ! young, gay,
Radiant, adorn'd outside ; a hidden ground
Of thought and of austerity within.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

PROGRESS.



INSECT and reptile, fish and bird and beast,
Cast their worn robes aside fresh robes to don ;
Tree, flower, and moss, put new year's raiment
on ;

Each natural type, the greatest as the least,
Renews its vesture when the use hath ceased.

How should man's spirit keep in unison
With the world's law of outgrowth, save it won
New robes and ampler as its girth increased ?
Quit shrunken creed, and dwarfed philosophy !

Let gently die an art's decaying fire !
Work on the ancient lines, but yet be free
To leave and frame anew, if God inspire !
The planets change their surface as they roll :
The force that binds the spheres must bind the soul.

HENRY G. HEWLETT.

RÉVEILLÉ.




LEEPERS awake ! the night is slowly dying,
 The dawn is breaking on a thousand hills,
 The truth is trickling in a thousand rills,
 The phantoms of the past are swiftly flying,
 The idols ignominiously lying'
 Deep in the dust of self-deluded wills,
 The legendary righteousness that fills
 Our bosoms with uncertainty and sighing,
 The ignorance that knows not—cares not—why ;
 The cowardice that trembles at the firing,
 The selfishness that truckles to a lie,
 The prejudice that interdicts enquiring,
 Did God give mind then but to dig a grave
 Wherein to bury all the gifts He gave ?

PHILIP ACTON.



UT to be still ! oh, but to cease awhile
The panting breath and hurrying steps of life,
The sights, the sounds, the struggle, and the
 strife,
Of hourly being ; the sharp biting file
Of action fretting on the tightened chain
Of rough existence ; all that is not pain,
But utter weariness ! oh ! to be free,
But for a while, from conscious entity !
To shut the banging doors and windows wide
Of restless sense, and let the soul abide,
Darkly and stilly, for a little space,
Gathering its strength up to pursue the race :
Oh, heavens ! to rest a moment, but to rest,
From this quick, gasping life, were to be blest !

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.

LASPHEME not thou thy sacred life, nor turn
O'er joys that God hath for a season lent
Perchance to try thy spirit, and its bent,
Effeminate soul and base—weakly to mourn.
There lies no desert in the land of life,
For e'en that tract that barrenest doth seem,
Laboured of thee in faith and hope, shall teem
With heavenly harvests, and rich gatherings, rife.
Haply no more, music, and mirth, and love,
And glorious things of old and younger art,
Shall of thy days make one perpetual feast :
But when these bright companions all depart,
Lay there thy head upon the ample breast
Of Hope,—and thou shalt hear the angels sing above.

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.



LIKE one who walketh in a plenteous land,
By flowing waters, under shady trees,
Through sunny meadows, where the summer
bees

Feed in the thyme and clover ; on each hand
Fair gardens lying, where of fruit and flower
The bounteous season hath poured out its dower :
Where saffron skies roof in the earth with light,
And birds sing thankfully towards Heaven, while he
With a sad heart walks through this jubilee,
Beholding how beyond this happy land,
Stretches a thirsty desert of gray sand,
Where all the air is one thick, leaden blight,
Where all things dwarf and dwindle,—so walk I,
Through my rich, present life, to what beyond doth
lie.

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.



OR we the mighty mountain plains have trod
Both in the glow of sunset and sunrise ;
And lighted by the moon of southern skies !
The snow-white torrent of the thundering flood

We two have watched together : In the wood
We two have felt the warm tears dim our eyes
While zephyrs softer than an infant's sighs
Ruffled the light air of our solitude !
O Earth, maternal Earth, and thou, O Heaven,
And Night first-born, who now, e'en now, dost waken
The host of stars, thy constellated train !
Tell me if those can ever be forgiven,
Those abject, who together have partaken
These Sacraments of Nature—and in vain ?

AUBREY DE VERE.

THE PINE WOODS.



WE stand upon the moorish mountain side,
From age to age, a solemn company ;
There are no voices in our paths, but we
Hear the great whirlwinds roaring loud and
wide ;
And like the sea-waves have our boughs replied,
From the beginning, to their stormy glee ;
The thunder rolls above us, and some tree
Smites with his bolt, yet doth the race abide ;
Answering all times ; but joyous, when the sun
Glints on the peaks that clouds no longer bear ;
And the young shoots to flourish have begun ;
And the quick seeds through the blue odorous air
From the expanding cones fall one by one ;
And silence as in temples dwelleth there.

JOHN, LORD HANMER.

HOMER.



HOMER, thy song men liken to the sea
 With all the notes of music in its tone,
 With tides that wash the dim dominion
 Of Hades, and light waves that laugh in glee
 Around the isles enchanted ; nay, to me
 Thy verse seems as the river of source unknown
 That glasses Egypt's temples overthrown
 In his sky-nurtured stream, eternally.

No wiser we than men of heretofore
 To find thy sacred fountains guarded fast ;
 Enough, thy flood makes green our human shore,
 As Nilus Egypt, rolling down his vast
 His fertile flood, that murmurs evermore
 Of gods dethroned, and empires in the past.

ANDREW LANG.

NATURE.



S a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half-willing, half-reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which though more splendid, may not please him
more ;
So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

Ο ΑΙΩΝ ΠΑΙΣ ΕΣΤΙ ΠΑΙΖΩΝ·

ΠΑΙΔΟΣ Η ΒΑΣΙΛΗΗ.



N orphan child lay in the purple glow
Of sunset, on the hill where she had played
All day with heather-bells, nor marked the
shade

Of night and autumn creeping from below.

A lonely lord came by and bade her go

And be his daughter, but she was afraid ;

So he alone plunged down the pine-wood glade.

A cottage mother came with locks of snow,

And bade the motherless to board and bed ;

She turned unheeded down a foxglove dell.

A nun came by on pilgrimage, who said,

“Come, dream of God and Heaven in cloister cell.”

The little one half-raised her golden head,

Then stooped and plucked another heather-bell.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SIMCOX.

AN INTERIOR.



THE grass around my limbs is deep and sweet ;
Yonder the house has lost its shadow wholly,
The blinds are dropped, and softly now and
slowly

The day flows in and floats ; a calm retreat
Of tempered light where fair things fair things meet ;
White busts and marble Dian make it holy,
Within a niche hangs Dürer's Melancholy
Brooding ; and, should you enter, there will greet
Your sense with vague allurements effluence faint
Of one magnolia bloom ; fair fingers draw
From the piano Chopin's heart-complaint ;
Alone, white-robed she sits ; a fierce macaw
On the verandah, proud of plume and paint,
Screams, insolent despot, showing beak and claw.

EDWARD DOWDEN.

TWO INFINITIES.



LONELY way, and as I went my eyes
 Could not unfasten from the Spring's sweet
 things,

Lush-sprouted grass, and all that climbs and clings
 In loose, deep hedges, where the primrose lies
 In her own fairness, buried blooms surprise
 The plunderer bee and stop his murmurings,
 And the glad flutter of a finch's wings
 Outstartle small blue-speckled butterflies.
 Blissfully did one speedwell plot beguile
 My whole heart long : I loved each separate flower,
 Kneeling. I looked up suddenly—Dear God !
 There stretched the shining plain for many a mile,
 The mountains rose with what invincible power !
 And how the sky was fathomless and broad !

EDWARD DOWDEN.

IF ONLY.



If only I might love my God and die !
But now He bids me love Him and live on,
Now when the bloom of all my life is gone,
The pleasant half of life has quite gone by.
My tree of hope is lopped that spread so high ;
And I forget how summer glowed and shone,
While autumn grips me with its fingers wan
And frets me with its fitful windy sigh.
When autumn passes then must winter numb,
And winter may not pass a weary while,
But when it passes spring shall flower again :
And in that spring who weepeth now shall smile,
Yea, they shall wax who now are on the wane,
Yea, they shall sing for love when Christ shall come.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

REST.



EARTH, lie heavily upon her eyes ;
Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth ;
Lie close around her ; leave no room for mirth
With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.
She hath no questions, she hath no replies,
Hushed in and curtained with a blessed dearth
Of all that irked her from the hour of birth ;
With stillness that is almost Paradise.
Darkness more clear than noonday holdeth her,
Silence more musical than any song ;
Even her very heart has ceased to stir :
Until the morning of Eternity
Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be ;
And when she wakes she will not think it long.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.



ART thou already weary of the way?
Thou who hast yet but half the way gone o'er ;
Get up, and lift thy burthen : lo, before
Thy feet the road goes stretching far away.
If thou already faint, who hast but come
Through half thy pilgrimage, with fellows gay,
Love, youth, and hope, under the rosy bloom
And temperate airs of early breaking day ;
Look yonder, how the heavens stoop and gloom,
There cease the trees to shade, the flowers to spring,
And th' angels leave thee ; what wilt thou become
Through yon drear stretch of dismal wandering,
Lonely and dark ? I shall take courage, friend,
For comes not every step more near the end ?

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.

THE NIGHT'S MESSAGE.



AST night there came a message to mine ear
 Saying : Come forth, that I may speak with thee.
 It was the Night herself that called to me.

And I arose and went forth without fear
 And without hope ; and by the mountain-mere,
 In the great silence sitting silently,
 Drank in amazed the large moon's purity :
 Yet was my soul unsoothed of any cheer.
 But when the moon had set, a great mist lay
 On the earth and me, and to its wide soft breast
 Drew forth the secret woe we might not say.

Then slowly, its brooding presence lightlier pressed,
 It heaved, and broke, and swayed, and soared away ;
 And the Earth had morn, and I some space of rest.

ERNEST MYERS.

THE PIPE-PLAYER.



COOL, and palm-shaded from the torrid heat,
The young brown tenor puts his singing by,
And sets the twin pipe to his lips to try
Some air of bulrush-glooms where lovers meet ;
O swart musician, time and fame are fleet,
Brief all delight, and youth's feet fain to fly !
Pipe on in peace ! To-morrow must we die ?
What matter, if our life to-day be sweet !
Soon, soon, the silver paper-reeds that sigh
Along the Sacred River will repeat
The echo of the dark-stoled bearers' feet,
Who carry you, with wailing, where must lie
Your swathed and withered body, by and by,
In perfumed darkness with the grains of wheat.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

BION.



HE wail of Moschus on the mountains crying
 The Muses heard, and loved it long ago ;
 They heard the hollows of the hills replying,
 They heard the weeping water's overflow ;
 They winged the sacred strain—the song undying,
 The song that all about the world must go,—
 When poets for a poet dead are sighing,
 The minstrels for a minstrel friend laid low.

And dirge to dirge that answers, and the weeping
 For Adonais by the summer sea,
 The plaints for Lycidas, and Thyrsis (sleeping
 Far from 'the forest ground called Thessaly,')
 These hold thy memory, Bion, in their keeping,
 And are but echoes of the moan for thee.

ANDREW LANG.

MYCENÆ.



SAW a weird procession glide along
 The vestibule before the Lion's gate ;¹
 A Man of godlike limb and warrior state,
 Who never looked behind him, led the throng ;
 Next a pale Girl, singing sweet sorrow, met
 My eyes, who ever pointed to a fleck
 Of ingrained crimson on her marble neck ;
 Her a fierce Woman, armed with knife and net,
 Close followed, whom a Youth pursued with smile,
 Once mild, now bitter-mad, himself the while
 Pursued by three foul Shapes, gory and grey :
 Dread Family ! . . . I saw another day
 The phantom of that Youth, sitting alone,
 Quiet, thought-bound, a stone upon a stone.

RICHARD, LORD HOUGHTON.

¹ πρόπυλα τάδε. Elect. 1391.

MIDSUMMER EVE.



EAST of Saint John, ah, where the faery train
 Who wont of old on this thy hallowed Eve
 In trim array their twilight dance to weave
 In forest nooks, unseen of eyes profane?
 Ay me, Titania wakes not, and the strain
 Of Pixy songs is still ! Dost thou not grieve,
 Grey Festival, that felon Time should leave
 Thy brooks and woods unhaunted e'er again ?
 O mourn, but not for them ! The Ithuriel flash
 That scathed their sheen still spares the baser creed,
 Where elder faith heard elfin timbrels clash,
 And fays' shrill pipings echo through the mead,
 There the new gospel's calculating greed
 Eyes the broad oaks, and hears the chink of cash.

SEBASTIAN EVANS.

LOVE'S EPITAPH.



RING wreaths and crown the golden hours !
Pile up the scented snows of spring !
If Love be dead of sorrow's sting,
Shall we make dark this day of ours,
This day of scents and silver showers
And lills of linnets on the wing ?
Sing out, and let the shadow ring
And all the grave run o'er with flowers !
If Love, you say, indeed be dead,
We will not spare to turn the leaf :
Spring is as sweet as aye, and red
And sweet as ever is the rose ;
He was so fickle, Love ! who knows ?
He might arise and mock our grief !

JOHN PAYNE.

THE EASTERN LOVE-SONG.



RISE up, my Love, my fair one come away,
For lo ! the winter's past, the rain is gone,
The flowers of earth have come with birds and
May,

The turtle cooeth sadly left alone :—

O rise, my Love, my sweet one come away,
The figs are green, the vines are fair and young,
O Love, my Love, my dove ! where art thou, say ?
Hast heard in rocky clefts the song I sung ?

O answer me again, thy voice is sweet,
Rejoice my sight, my Love, with face of thine,
O cease thy shyness, come with love's quick feet,
For thou my Love art tender, thou art mine :

Belovèd come, among the lilies feed,
By stream and lotus flower and whispering reed.

J. W. INCHBOLD.

THE LOVE OF NARCISSUS.



LIKE him who met his own eyes in the river,
The poet trembles at his own long gaze,
That meets him thro' the changing nights
and days,
From out great Nature ; all her waters quiver

With his fair image facing him for ever ;
The music that he listens to, betrays
His own heart to his ears ; by trackless ways
His wild thoughts tend to him in long endeavour.

His dreams are far among the silent hills ;
His vague voice calls him from the darkened plain
With winds at night ; strange recognition thrills
His lonely heart with piercing love and pain ;
He knows his sweet mirth in the mountain rills,
His weary tears that touch him with the rain.

ALICE MEYNELL (A. C. THOMPSON).

LOVE'S EPIPHANY.



READ softly here—for Love has pass'd this way !

Ay, even while I laughed to scorn His name,
And mock'd aloud : There is no Love ! Love
came.

The air was glorious with an added day,
I saw the heavens opened far away,
And forth with bright blown hair and eyes aflame,
With lyre-shaped wings, filled with the wind's acclaim,
Flew Love and deigned a moment here to stay.

I fell upon my face and cried in fear,
Oh Love ! Love ! Love ! my King and God !
But when I look'd, He was no longer near.
Since then I watch beside this grass He trod,
And pray all day, all night, for any pain
Love can inflict, so He will come again.

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.



OD sent a poet to reform His earth.
But when he came and found it cold and poor,
Harsh and unlovely, where each prosperous boor
Held poets light for all their heavenly birth,
He thought—Myself can make one better worth
The living in than this—full of old lore,
Music and light and love, where Saints adore
And Angels, all within mine own soul's girth.

But when at last he came to die, his soul ..
Saw Earth (flying past to Heaven) with new love,
And all the unused passion in him cried :
O God, your Heaven I know and weary of ;
Give me this world to work in and make whole !
God spoke : Therein, fool, thou hast lived and died !

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.

A YOUNG CONVERT.

Mio cor in sul fiorire e in sul far frutto.—PETRARCA.



HO knows what days I answer for to-day?

Giving the bud I give the flower. I bow

This yet unfaded and a faded brow ;

Bending these knees and feeble knees, I pray.

Thoughts yet unripe in me I bend one way,

Give one repose to pain I know not now,

One leaven to joy that comes, I guess not how.

Oh, rash ! (I smile) as one, when Spring is grey,

Who dedicates a land of hidden wheat.

I fold to-day at altars far apart

Hands trembling with what toils? In their retreat

I sign my love to come, my folded art.

I light the tapers at my head and feet,

And lay the crucifix on this silent heart.

ALICE MEYNELL (A. C. THOMPSON).

“VOX POPULI VOX DEI.”



OX populi vox Dei,” do they say?

Alas, quite otherwise !—and he who first

Mouthed the crude sophism, sowed a seed
accurst,

To choke the growth of Truth, and bar Man’s way

To Freedom with rank jungle—fruitful but

Of rottenness. All history proves this true :

God speaks not by the Many, but the Few.

And in all ages,—since “The People” shut

With the blank seal of death, the inspired lips

Of Socrates,—since that yet darker hour,

When blood-stained Calvary owned their “sovereign
power,”

And nature groaned in earthquake and eclipse—

Has that fierce Voice at some loud babbler’s nod,

Been lifted in blind rage against the Voice of God.

SIR NOEL PATON.

AUTUMN.



HE air is chill with winter's rimy breath,
 Birds silent cower apart on shrivelled spray,
 Darkness invades the azure realms of Day,
 All life seems over-blowing into Death.
 Yet on the wall the plum grows dark and mellow,
 On orchard paths red apples patter down,
 The chestnut in the dank wood gathers brown,
 And on the hill the stooks gleam golden-yellow.
 Autumn once more has crowned the vading year
 With fulness, and in joy brings home her sheaves,
 Nor for the buried blooms of summer grieves.—
 But I—with whom, too, life is in the sear—
 Can I rejoice—spring-time and summer gone,
 And on my barren boughs but withered leaves alone?

SIR NOEL PATON.



HAT time the flaming arrows of the dawn,
Scatter the starry cohorts of the night,
And in her leafy covert far withdrawn
Warbles the nightingale her soul's delight,—
From golden visions of my love I start—
As some spent wanderer stretched on Libyan sand
Wakes, with sick pause and tumult of the heart,
From dreams of fountains in a flowery land,
Yet raises not his eyes—because he knows
Nor stream nor shade through all the desert lorn
May greet them. So against the light I close
My desolate eyes, because henceforth nor morn,
Nor eve, through all the desert years, may bring,
Now She is lost, surcease of sorrowing.

SIR NOEL PATON.

AN APPEAL TO NATURE.



ART thou less beautiful or I more dull?
O nature, once my passion and delight,
How shall I win thee? is thy promise null,
Or have I forfeited my ancient right?
By me thy skiey splendours are unwatched,
By me thy changeful year unheeded flies,
Splendours of sunrise or of eve unmatched,
Changes but new delights to lovers' eyes.
Time was, I thought, that thou to me hadst given
The dearest boon imparted from above,
The greener meadow and the bluer heaven,
With the deep heart of wonder and of love.
But now the sharer of a common lot,
I only wonder that I wonder not.

ERASMUS HENRY BRODIE.

MILTON.



He left the upland lawns and serene air
Wherefrom his soul her noble nurture drew,
And reared his helm among the unquiet crew
Battling beneath ; the morning radiance rare
Of his young brow amid the tumult there
Grew grim with sulphurous dust and sanguine dew ;
Yet through all soilure they who marked him knew
The signs of his life's dayspring, calm and fair.
But when peace came, peace fouler far than war,
And mirth more dissonant than battle's tone,
He, with a scornful sigh of his clear soul,
Back to his mountain clomb, now bleak and froze,
And with the awful Night he dwelt alone,
In darkness, listening to the thunder's roll.

ERNEST MYERS.

ON REFUSAL OF AID BETWEEN NATIONS.



NOT that the earth is changing, O my God !
 Nor that the seasons totter in their walk,—
 Not that the virulent ill of act and talk
 Seethes ever as a winepress ever trod,—
 Not therefore are we certain that the rod
 Weighs in thine hand to smite thy world; though now
 Beneath thine hand so many nations bow,
 So many kings :—not therefore, O my God !—

But because Man is parcelled out in men
 Even thus ; because, for any wrongful blow,
 No man not stricken asks, ‘ I would be told
 Why thou dost strike ; ’ but his heart whispers then,
 ‘ He is he, I am I.’ By this we know
 That the earth falls asunder, being old.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

A CHILD OF THE AGE.



O for a voice that in a single song
Could quiver with the hopes and moan the fears
And speak the speechless secret of the years,
And rise, and sink, and at the last be strong !
O for a trumpet-call to stir the throng
Of doubtful fighting-men, whose eyes and ears
Watch till a banner in the East appears,
And the skies ring that have been still so long !
O age of mine, if one could tune for thee
A marching music out of this thy woe !
If one could climb upon a hill and see
Thy gates of promise on the plain below,
And gaze a minute on the bliss to be
And knowing it be satisfied to know !

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS.

COR CORDIUM.



HEART of hearts, the chalice of love's fire,
Hid round with flowers and all the bounty of
bloom ;

O wonderful and perfect heart, for whom
The lyrist liberty made life a lyre ;
O heavenly heart, at whose most dear desire
Dead love, living and singing, cleft his tomb,
And with him risen and regent in death's room
All day thy choral pulses rang full choir ;
O heart whose beating blood was running song,
O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs were,
Help us for thy free love's sake to be free,
True for thy truth's sake, for thy strength's sake strong,
Till very liberty make clean and fair
The nursing earth as the sepulchral sea.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

IN SAN LORENZO.




Is thine hour come to wake, O slumbering Night?
Hath not the Dawn a message in thine ear?
Though thou be stone and sleep, yet shalt thou
hear

When the word falls from heaven—Let there be light.
Thou knowest we would not do thee the despite
To wake thee while the old sorrow and shame were near;
We spake not loud for thy sake, and for fear
Lest thou shouldst lose the rest that was thy right,
The blessing given thee that was thine alone,
The happiness to sleep and to be stone:
Nay, we kept silence of thee for thy sake
Albeit we knew thee alive, and left with thee
The great good gift to feel not nor to see;
But will not yet thine Angel bid thee wake?

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

THE WORLD.

Y day she woos me, soft, exceeding fair :
But all night as the moon so changeth she ;
Loathsome and foul with hideous leprosy
And subtle serpents gliding in her hair.
By day she woos me to the outer air,
Ripe fruits, sweet flowers, and full satiety :
But through the night a beast she grins at me,
A very monster void of love and prayer.
By day she stands a lie : by night she stands
In all the naked horror of the truth
With pushing horns and clawed and clutching hands.
Is this a friend indeed ; that I should sell
My soul to her, give her my life and youth,
Till my feet, cloven too, take hold on hell ?

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

SHAKSPEARE.



OTHERS abide our question—Thou art free !
We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge! So some sovran hill
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,

Planting his stedfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the border, often, of his base
To the foil'd searching of mortality ;

And thou, whose head did stars and sunbeams know,
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure,
Didst walk on earth unguess'd at.—Better so !

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole voice in that victorious brow.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

THE BETTER PART.



LONG fed on boundless hopes, O race of man,
 How angrily thou spurn'st all simpler fare !
 'Christ,' some one says, 'was human as we are.
 No judge eyes us from Heaven, our sin to scan.

We live no more, when we have done our span.'—
 'Well, then, for Christ,' thou answerest, 'who can care?
 From sin, which Heaven records not, why forbear?
 Live we like brutes our life without a plan !'

So answerest thou : but why not rather say :
 'Hath man no second life?—*Pitch this one high !*
 Sits there no judge in Heaven, our sin to see?—

More strictly, then, the inward judge obey !
 Was Christ a man like us?—*Ah ! let us try*
If we then, too, can be such men as he !'

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

WORLDLY PLACE.



VEN in a palace, life may be led well!

So spoke the imperial sage, purest of men,
 Marcus Aurelius.—But the stifling den
 Of common life, where, crowded up pell-mell,


Our freedom for a little bread we sell,
 And drudge under some foolish master's ken,
 Who rates us, if we peer outside our pen—
 Match'd with a palace, is not this a hell?

Even in a palace! On his truth sincere,
 Who spoke these words, no shadow ever came;
 And when my ill-school'd spirit is aflame

Some nobler, ampler stage of life to win,
 I'll stop, and say: 'There were no succour here!
 The aids to noble life are all within.'

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

EAST LONDON.

' WAS August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, look'd thrice dispirited ;


I met a preacher there I knew, and said :
' Ill and o'erwork'd, how fare you in this scene ?'
' Bravely !' said he ; ' for I of late have been
Much cheer'd with thoughts of Christ, *the living bread.*'

O human soul ! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light,
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,

To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam,
Not with lost toil thou labourest through the night !
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

FAITH.

‘OLLOW Me,’ Jesus said ; and they uprose,
Peter and Andrew rose and followed Him,
Followed Himeven to Heaven through death
most grim,

And through a long hard life without repose,
Save in the grand ideal of its close.

‘ Take up your cross and come with me,’ He said ;
And the world listens yet through all her dead,
And still would answer had we faith like those.

But who can light again such beacon-fire !
With gladsome haste and with rejoicing souls—
How would men gird themselves for the emprise ?
Leaving their black boats by the dead lake’s mire,
Leaving their slimy nets by the cold shoals,
Leaving their old oars, nor once turn their eyes.

WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.

PAST AND FUTURE.



AIR garden, where the man and woman dwelt,
And loved, and worked, and where, in work's
reprieve,

The sabbath of each day, the restful eve,
They sat in silence, with locked hands, and felt
The voice which compassed them, a-near, a-far,
Which murmured in the fountains and the breeze,
Which breathed in spices from the laden trees,
And sent a silvery shout from each lone star.
Sweet dream of Paradise ! and if a dream,
One that has helped us when our faith was weak ;
We wake, and still it holds us, but would seem
Before us, not behind,—the good we seek,—
The good from lowest root which waxes ever,
The golden age of science and endeavour.

EMILY PFEIFFER.



AN awful voice rose upward from the land ;
‘ Is there no God ? ’ it cried ; and in that tone
Compact of many, might be heard the groan
Of those who wedded faith and widowed stand ;
The jeer of those who cast her from their hand ;
And fainter, and at intervals, the moan
Of those whose flickering faith their breath has blown
Defiantly to quench or to expand.
O God of Mercy ! hidest Thou from these ?
From Thee they have their majesty of mind ;
Seeing all else, shall they to Thee be blind ?
Then came far voices answering : not with ease
I gathered the low murmurs of reply :
‘ They shall choose Good : then saith He, “ It is I.” ’

HON. MRS. O. N. KNOX.

TO DEATH, THE SAVIOUR.



NOT that disease his cruel hand has raised
 And clutched away thy beauty and thy
 strength,
 Threatening to hold them all thy sad day's
 length—

It is not that which made the eyes that gazed
 Falter and fill with trembling tears that dazed
 My inward vision, like my outward view,
 Till hope and courage faded, and I knew
 A bitter dread which left me dumb, amazed.
 No, it was this : that fell disease should gain
 Over thy virtues and thy steadfast mind
 A hold which thro' long years of health to find
 All sins and all temptations sought in vain.
 Aye'tis this dread which sometimes makes me dumb;
 Death, tho' I love him, ere this comes, oh come !

HON. MRS. O. N. KNOX.

GOD-SEEKING.



OD-seeking thou hast journeyed far and nigh.
On dawn-lit mountain-tops thy soul did yearn
To hear His trailing garments wander by ;
And where 'mid thunderous glooms great sunsets burn,
Vainly thou sought'st His shadow on sea and sky ;
Or gazing up, at noontide, could'st discern
Only a neutral heaven's indifferent eye
And countenance austerely taciturn.

Yet whom thou soughtest I have found at last ;
Neither where tempest dims the world below
Nor where the westering daylight reels aghast
In conflagrations of red overthrow :
But where this virgin brooklet silvers past,
And yellowing either bank the king-cups blow.

WILLIAM WATSON.

BEETHOVEN.



MASTER, if immortals suffer aught
Of sadness like to ours, and in like sighs
And with like overflow of darkened eyes
Disburden them, I know not ; but methought,
What time to-day mine ear the utterance caught
Whereby in manifold melodious wise
Thy heart's unrestful infelicities
Rose like a sea with easeless winds distraught,
That thine seemed angel's grieving, as of one
Strayed somewhere out of heaven, and uttering
Lone moan and alien wail : because he hath
Failed to remember the remounting path,
And singing, weeping, can but weep and sing
Ever, through vasts forgotten of the sun.

WILLIAM WATSON.

FROM "SONNETS ON THE THOUGHT
OF DEATH."



NE saith, 'The world's a stage: I took my seat ;
I saw the show ; and now 'tis time to rise.'
Another saith, 'I came with eager eyes
Into life's banquet-hall to drink and eat :
The hour hath struck, when I must shoe my feet,
And gird me for the way that deathward lies.'
Another saith, 'Life is a bird that flies
From dark through light to darkness, arrowy-fleet.'
One show ; one feast ; one flight ;—must that be all ?
Could we unlearn this longing, could we cry,
'Thanks for our part in life's fair festival !
We know not whence we came, we know not why
We go, nor where ; but God is over all !'
It would not then be terrible to die.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

II.



NE saith : the whole world is a Comedy
 Played for the mirth of God upon his throne,
 Whereof the hidden meanings will be known
 When Michael's trumpet thrills through earth
 and sea.

Fate is the dramaturge ; necessity
 Allots the parts ; the scenes, by nature shown,
 Embrace each element and every zone
 Ordered with infinite variety.—

Another saith : no calm-eyed Sophocles
 Indites the tragedy of human doom,
 But some cold scornful Aristophanes,
 Whose zanies gape and gibber in thick gloom,
 While nightingales, shrill 'mid the shivering trees,
 Jar on the silence of the neighbouring tomb.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

III.



USH, heart of mine ! Nor jest, nor blasphemy,
Beseems the strengthless creature of an hour !
Wed resignation rather ; dread the power,
Whate'er it be, that rules thy destiny.
Nay, learn to love ; love irresistibly !
With obstinate reiteration shower
Praises and prayers, thy spirit's dearest dower,
On the mute altar of that deity !
They work no wrong who worship : they are pure
Who seek God even in the sightless blue :
And they have hope of victory who endure.
This mortal life, like a dark avenue,
Is leading thee perchance to light secure
And limitless horizons clear to view.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

A PALINODE.

"Lux est umbra Dei."



AY, Death, thou art a shadow ! even as light
Is but the shadow of invisible God,
And of that shade the shadow is thin Night,
Veiling the earth whereon our feet have trod ;
So art Thou but the shadow of this life,
Itself the pale and unsubstantial shade
Of living God, fulfilled by love and strife
Throughout the universe Himself hath made :
And as frail Night, following the flight of earth,
Obscures the world we breathe in, for a while,
So Thou, the reflex of our mortal birth,
Veilest the life wherein we weep and smile :
But when both earth and life are whirled away,
What shade can shroud us from God's deathless day ?

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

INCLUSIVENESS.



HE changing guests, each in a different mood,
Sit at the roadside table and arise :
And every life among them in likewise
Is a soul's board set daily with new food.
What man has bent o'er his son's sleep, to brood
How that face shall watch his when cold it lies?—
Or thought, as his own mother kissed his eyes,
Of what her kiss was when his father wooed ?

May not this ancient room thou sit'st in dwell
In separate living souls for joy or pain ?
Nay, all its corners may be painted plain
Where Heaven shows pictures of some life spent well ;
And may be stamped, a memory all in vain,
Upon the sight of lidless eyes in Hell.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

KNOWN IN VAIN.



Two whose love, first foolish, widening scope,
Knows suddenly, with music high and soft,
The Holy of holies; who because they scoff'd
Are now amazed with shame, nor dare to cope
With the whole truth aloud, lest heaven should ope;
Yet, at their meetings, laugh not as they laugh'd
In speech; nor speak, at length; but sitting oft
Together, within hopeless sight of hope
For hours are silent:—So it happeneth
When Work and Will awake too late, to gaze
After their life sailed by, and hold their breath.
Ah! who shall dare to search through what sad maze
Thenceforth their incommunicable ways
Follow the desultory feet of Death?

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

STILLBORN LOVE.



THE hour which might have been yet might not be,
Which man's and woman's heart conceived
and bore

Yet whereof life was barren,—on what shore
Bides it the breaking of Time's weary sea?
Bondchild of all consummate joys set free,
It somewhere sighs and serves, and mute before
The house of Love, hears through the echoing door
His hours elect in choral consonancy.

But lo! what wedded souls now hand in hand
Together tread at last the immortal strand
With eyes where burning memory lights love home?
Lo! how the little outcast hour has turned
And leaped to them and in their faces yearned:—
'I am your child: O parents, ye have come!'

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

THE ONE HOPE.



WHEN vain desire at last and vain regret
 Go hand in hand to death, and all is vain,
 What shall assuage the unforgotten pain
 And teach the forgetful to forget?
 Shall Peace be still a sunk stream long unmet,—
 Or may the soul at once in a green plain
 Stoop through the spray of some sweet life-fountain
 And cull the dew-drenched flowering amulet?

Ah! when the wan soul in that golden air
 Between the scripted petals softly blown
 Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown,—
 Ah! let none other written spell soe'er
 But only the one Hope's one name be there,—
 Not less nor more, but even that word alone.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

SLEEPLESS DREAMS.



IRT in dark growths, yet glimmering with one
star,

O night desirous as the nights of youth !

Why should my heart within thy spell, for-
sooth,

Now beat, as the bride's finger-pulses are

Quickened within the girdling golden bar ?

What wings are these that fan my pillow smooth ?

And why does Sleep, waved back by Joy and Ruth,

Tread softly round and gaze at me from far ?

Nay, night deep-leaved ! And would Love feign in
thee

Some shadowy palpitating grove that bears

Rest for man's eyes and music for his ears ?

O lonely night ! art thou not known to me,

A thicket hung with masks of mockery

And watered with the wasteful warmth of tears ?

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

BELOW THE OLD HOUSE.



ENEATH those buttressed walls with lichens
grey,
Beneath the slopes of trees whose flickering
shade

Darkens the pools by dun green velvetted,
The stream leaps like a living thing at play,—
In haste it seems ; it cannot, cannot stay !
'The great boughs changing there from year to year,
And the high jackdaw-haunted eaves, still hear
The burden of the rivulet—Passing away !

And some time certainly that oak no more
Will keep the winds in check ; his breadth of beam
Will go to rib some ship for some far shore ;
Those coigns and eaves will crumble, while that stream
Will still run whispering, whispering night and day,
That over-song of father Time—Passing away !

WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.

ON THE RIVIERA DI PONENTE.

(Early Morning.)

IVALS in beauty, who shall bear the prize ?
These mountains, like to creeds, which tho'
they wear
Earth's veil of mists are clear in heaven's blue air :
Aurora's rosy footfall as she hies
Over the snowfields while the vapour flies :
That sea, wherein ten thousand Nereids fair
Transfuse to line and tint their drifted hair,
Smooth rippling limbs and gleaming violet eyes :
Those orange slopes which flow with silver and gold :
This alien palm, whose trembling branches sigh
Eastward with Phosphor : or Mentone's eye
Sparkling 'neath olive-lashes ? Let them call
Yon rising sun for arbiter : Behold
Their claims are equal, and he crowns them all !

HENRY G. HEWLETT.

WHAT IS MY LADY LIKE?



WHAT is my lady like? thou fain would'st know—

A rosy chaplet of fresh apple bloom,
Bound with blue ribbon, lying on the snow ;

What is my lady like? the violet gloom
Of evening, with deep orange light below,
She's like the noonday smell of a pine wood,
She's like the sounding of a stormy flood,
She's like the mountain-top high in the skies,
To which the day its earliest light doth lend ;
She's like a pleasant path without an end ;
Like a strange secret and a sweet surprise ;
Like a sharp axe of doom, wreathed with blush roses,
A casket full of gems whose key one loses ;
Like a hard saying, wonderful and wise.

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.

REMEMBRANCE.



O think of thee ! it was thy fond request
When yester-week we parted. Ah ! how well
I heed thy bidding only Love may tell
Beneath his roses. As, for welcome rest,
The bird, wing-weary, seeks her downy nest,
So oft, dear heart ! from toil and care I flee,
And, nestling in my happy thought of thee,
With sweet repose my weary soul is blest.
To think of thee—who evermore art near
My conscious spirit, like the halo spread
In altar-pictures round some stately head,
As 'twere of Heaven the golden atmosphere—
What can I else, until in death I sink,
And, thinking of my darling, cease to think ?

JOHN GODFREY SAXE.

APPLE-BLOSSOMS.



IN the young year, when through the cloudless
mind

But light dreams float, and blossoms strew the
ground,

Among mossed apple-trees a trunk I found,
And carved a name I knew across the rind:
Then in the pink, soft-settling drift reclined,
I slept, and dreamed that she my heart had crowned
E'en then must pass across this orchard, bound
On errand slight, or purpose scarce defined.
And (in my dream) methought my lady meek
Did come, in truth, and read the deep-cut name;
And dearer grew her eyes, and in her cheek
The sweet blood fluttered like a little flame.
Then in a shower of bloom, I woke to speak . . .
And lo ! my Love, suffused with gentle shame.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

LOVE, TIME, AND DEATH.



H me, dread friends of mine,—Love, Time, and
Death :

Sweet Love, who came to me on sheeny wing.

And gave her to my arms—her lips, her breath,

And all her golden ringlets clustering :

And Time, who gathers in the flying years,

He gave me all, but where is all he gave ?

He took my love and left me barren tears,

Weary and lone I follow to the grave.

There Death will end this vision half-divine,

Wan Death, who waits in shadow evermore,

And silent, ere he gave the sudden sign ;

Oh, gently lead me thro' thy narrow door,

Thou gentle Death, thou trustiest friend of mine—

Ah me, for Love—will Death my love restore ?

FREDERICK LOCKER.

HAPPY ARE THEY.



HAPPY are they who kiss thee, morn and even,
Parting the hair upon thy forehead white :
For them the sky is bluer and more bright,
And purer their thanksgivings rise to Heaven.
Happy are they to whom thy songs are given ;
Happy are they on whom thy hands alight :
And happiest they for whom thy prayers at night
In tender piety so oft have striven.
Away with vain regrets and selfish sighs—
Even I, dear friend, am lonely, not unblest :
Permitted sometimes on that form to gaze,
Or feel the light of those consoling eyes :
If but a moment on my cheek it stays
I know that gentle beam from all the rest !

AUBREY DE VERE.

BONDSERVICE OF THE HEART.



WHEN by the fire we sit with hand in hand,
My spirit seems to watch beside your knee,
Alert and eager at your least command
To do your bidding over earth and sea ;
You sigh,—and of that dubious message fain,
I scour the world to bring you what you lack,
Till, from some island of the spicy main,
The pressure of your fingers calls me back :
You smile,—and I, who love to be your slave,
Post round the orb at your fantastic will,
Though, while my fancy skims the laughing wave,
My hand lies happy in your hand and still ;
Nor more from fortune or from life would crave,
Than that dear silent service to fulfil.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

MISTRUST.



HE peacock screamed and strutted in the court,
The fountain flashed its crystal to the sun,
The noisy life of noon was just begun,
And happy men forgot that life was short ;
We two stood, laughing, at the turret-pane,
When some Apollo of the ranks of Mars,
Crimson with plumes and glittering like the stars,
Galloped across below, and there drew rein.
To see so confident a man-at-arms
My heart sank suddenly from sun to shade,
But she, who knows the least of Love's alarms,
Laid one soft hand upon my throbbing wrist,
And in her eyes I read the choice she made,
And anger slumbered like a tired child kissed.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

AUTUMN VIOLETS.



KEEP love for youth, and violets for the spring :
Or if these bloom when worn-out autumn
grieves,

Let them lie hid in double shade of leaves,
Their own, and others dropped down withering ;
For violets suit when home birds build and sing,
Not when the outbound bird a passage cleaves ;
Not with dry stubble of mown harvest sheaves,
But when the green world buds to blossoming.
Keep violets for the spring, and love for youth,
Love that should dwell with beauty, mirth, and hope :
Or if a later sadder love be born,
Let this not look for grace beyond its scope,
But give itself, nor plead for answering truth—
A grateful Ruth tho' gleaning scanty corn.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

NOT THOU BUT I.



I must have been for one of us, my own,
To drink this cup and eat this bitter bread.
Had not my tears upon thy face been shed,
Thy tears had dropped on mine ; if I alone
Did not walk now, thy spirit would have known
My loneliness, and did my feet not tread
This weary path and steep, thy feet had bled
For mine, and thy mouth had for mine made moan ;
And so it comforts me, yea, not in vain,
To think of thy eternity of sleep,
To know thine eyes are tearless though mine weep :
And when this cup's last bitterness I drain,
One thought shall still its primal sweetness keep—
Thou hadst the peace and I the undying pain.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.



WOMAN whose familiar face I hold
 In my most sacred thought as in a shrine,
 Who in my memories art become divine—

Dost thou remember now those years of old
 When out of all thine own life thou didst mould
 This life and breathe thy heart in this of mine,
 Winning, for faith in that fair work of thine,
 To rest and be in heaven?—Alas, behold!—
 Another woman coming after thee
 Hath had small pity,—with a wanton kiss
 Hath quite consumed my heart and ruined this
 The life that was thy work : O, Mother, see ;
 Thou hast lived all in vain, done all amiss ;
 Come down from heaven again, and die with me !

ARTHUR W. E. O'SHAUGHNESSY.

LOVE, THE INTIMIDATOR.



BESIDE a fountain's spurting trumpeter
A large white-throated lady lean'd and flung
Her long-sleeved arms above her dulcimer,
And quick the glib notes ran along her tongue,
Like rose and fruit. "*Ah bitter love!*" she sung;
Then lustily: "*Sweet Death, the comforter!*"
It chanced that Love, the garden slopes among,
Came like the palmer, Death, and look'd at her.

The lady swoon'd amid her stiff brocades,
And wept amain, though Love laugh'd low and sweet.
She call'd on Love, but Love with rapid feet
Pass'd out amid the sombre laurel-shades,
Unto the chamber of her nooning maids,
And bade them broider at her winding-sheet.

THEO. MARZIALS.

LOVE AND DEATH.



WITHIN a wood I strayed at sunset hour,
The leaves were still, and red upon the ground,
The trees themselves stood steadfast as a tower
That has survived a thousand things around,
The iris here and there in Autumn seed,
Was brighter than in Spring ; I saw no bird,
Nor noted breathing thing ; all hushed indeed
Was this sad grove ; whilst deep below I heard
The sea, with dull monotony of moan,
And saw the white foam die on marble strand ;
Mountain and sky far up above looked lone,
Whilst by a brook, winged arrows in his hand,
Sat Love the imperishable one,—and near,
The last grey mortal of the latest year.

J. W. INCHBOLD.

NIGHTINGALE AND CUCKOO.



NIGHTINGALE and cuckoo ! it was meet
That you should come together ; for ye twain
Are emblems of the rapture and the pain

That in the April of our life compete,
Until we know not which is the more sweet,
Nor yet have learnt that both of them are vain.
Yet why, O nightingale, break off thy strain
While yet the cuckoo doth his call repeat ?
Not so with me. To sweet woe did I cling
Long after echoing happiness was dead,
And so found solace. Now, alas, the sting !
Cuckoo and nightingale alike have fled ;
Neither for joy nor sorrow do I sing,
And autumn silence gathers in their stead.

ALFRED AUSTIN.

THE SWAN.




WITH broad soft breast, with pliant neck and long
 To reach the small fish down among the reeds,
 Hitherward scattering the fresh water-beads
 The snowy beauty comes. O fair and strong,
 Thou Lais, queen of pleasure, with my song
 I would enrich thee were it worthier,
 And if it could be but the minister
 Of love, that to such goddess should belong.

So I held out to her this page where lay
 Some dainty fruits, and flowers, a rare bouquet ;—
 Whereat she smote her ample wings abroad,
 Raised her black mouth from whence a bruised worm fell,
 And hissed, as good deeds may be hissed in hell :
 The spray fell over me upon the sod.

WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.

PYGMALION.


 MISTRESS of gods and men ! I have been thine
 From boy to man, and many a myrtle rod
 Have I made grow upon thy sacred sod,
 Nor ever have I passed thy white shafts nine
 Without some votive offering for the shrine,
 Carved beryl or chased bloodstone ;—aid me now,
 And I will live to fashion for thy brow
 Heart-breaking priceless things : oh, make her mine.

Venus inclined her ear, and through the Stone
 Forthwith slid warmth like spring through sapling-stems,
 And lo, the eyelid stirred, beneath had grown
 The tremulous light of life, and all the hems
 Of her zoned peplos shook—upon his breast,
 She sank by two dread gifts at once oppressed.

WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.

THE BANQUET.



OW, as when sometime with high festival
A conquering king new realms inaugurates,
The souls of men go up within the gates
Of their new-made mysterious palace-hall.
And on their ears in bursts of triumph fall
Marches of mighty music, while below,
In carven cups with far-sought gems aglow,
And lamped by shapes of splendour on the wall,
The new wine of man's kingdom flashes free.
Yet some among the wonders wondering there
Sit desolate, and shivering inwardly
Lack yet some love to make the strange thing fair ;
Yea, to their sad souls rather seem to be
Sheep from the sheepfold strayed they know not where.

ERNEST MYERS.

THE LOST SHEPHERD.



Y me, the kindly shepherd comes not now
Whose feet were once so fair within the fold,
In whose high presence were our fathers bold.
They said, his tender heart would not allow
His sheep to perish ; his side and his bright brow
And hands and feet were bleeding ; so they told.
But of the face of him might none behold
Even a little, save he be somehow
Seven times refined in love's refining fire.
This man should haply something see aright.
Alas, and must he know as he draws nigher
The longed-for image from the straining sight
Of his sad eyes and pain of his desire
Receding, rapt into the lonely night ?

ERNEST MYERS.

RELIGIO POETÆ.



HELP thou, but be not holpen. If need be,
Give men what ware thou hast worth gold,
for gold ;

And, so thy tale of ware be truly told,
Buy Freedom as thou wilt,—but be thou free !
Here close thy count with man. Save this to thee
Be there no reckoning made of bought and sold,
But live the life God gives thee, and withhold
Thy nobler hand from aught of earthly fee.
Stand four-square to the world for praise or blame :
Deserve, but touch no guerdon. Name and fame
Titles and useless wealth leave thou to them
Who can be paid thereby. Such be not thou !
True work, true love can spare the laurelled brow :
The great are greatest with no diadem.

SEBASTIAN EVANS.

THE UTMOST.



OME clerks aver that, as the tree doth fall,
Even for ever so the tree shall lie,
And that Death's act doth make perpetual
The last state of the souls of men that die.
If this be so,—if this, indeed, were sure,
Then not a moment longer would I live ;
Who, being now as I would fain endure,
If man's last state doth his last hour survive,
Should be among the blessèd souls. I fear
Life's many changes, not Death's changelessness.
So perfect is this moment's passing cheer,
I needs must tremble lest it pass to less.
Thus but in fickle love of life I live,
Lest fickle life me of my love deprive.

ROBERT, EARL LYTTON.

EVENING.



ALREADY evening ! In the duskiest nook
Of yon dusk corner, under the Death's-head,
Between the alembics, thrust this legended,
And iron-bound, and melancholy book,
For I will read no longer. The loud brook
Shelves his sharp light up shallow banks thin-spread ;
The slumbrous west grows slowly red, and red :
Up from the ripen'd corn her silver hook
The moon is lifting : and deliciously
Along the warm blue hills the day declines :
The first star brightens while she waits for me,
And round her swelling heart the zone grows tight :
Musing, half-sad, in her soft hair she twines
The white rose, whispering " He will come to-night ! "

ROBERT, EARL LYTTON.

WISE PASSIVENESS.



THINK you I choose or that or this to sing?
I lie as patient as yon wealthy stream
Dreaming among green fields its summer dream,
Which takes whate'er the gracious hours will bring
Into its quiet bosom ; not a thing
Too common, since perhaps you see it there
Who else had never seen it, though as fair
As on the world's first morn ; a fluttering
Of idle butterflies ; or the deft seeds
Blown from a thistle-head ; a silver dove
As faultlessly ; or the large, yearning eyes
Of pale Narcissus ; or beside the reeds
A shepherd seeking lilies for his love,
And evermore the all-encircling skies.

EDWARD DOWDEN.

IN THE NURSERY.



AND he has fallen asleep amid his toys,
The very wholesaleman of nursery glee,
The soul of prattling importunity !

Bids peace to open holiday and noise—
Plays truant from his play ! Boys will be boys.
His streaming locks have left his temples free
(As when one swings in orchards) ; only see
The crimson in his cheeks—what violet joys
Peep through the velvet of each scarce-closed lid,
Like folded buds. The rogue ! what if he should
But lie in wait of purpose to deceive ?
Ah no ! give him his hour ; and then, unbid,
He shall disport in all the hardihood
And all the unchallenged truth of make-believe.

WILLIAM RENTON.


ELIM.



T Elim with its whispering grove of palm,
And clustered wells in cool abundance spring-
ing,
Israel encamped--their sighs exchanged for
singing,
And Marah's murmurs for a gladsome psalm.
Earth has its Elims still of shadowy calm—
Sweet homes, with gentle vines about them clinging,
And olive branches green—young voices ringing,
And tried affection breathing grateful balm.
Lord, if such love makes glad, such beauty graces,
The desert tracts thy people tread below—
Such wells of comfort cheer earth's resting-places,
Such pleasant shades relieve the way we go,—
That heavenly land itself, how passing fair,
How passing sweet the home that waits us there !

RICHARD WILTON.

FOR ME AND FOR YOU.

 HIS world has work for us : we must refuse
No honest task, nor uncongenial toil.
Fear not your foot to tire, nor robe to soil ;
Nor let your hands grow white for want of use.
Support the weak : guard virtue from abuse.
Face need and pain. The Adversary foil.
Let not your lamp go out, but with fresh oil
Restore its flame. Yield all the days their dues,
But when the evening light is lost, or dim,
Commune alone, in spirit, and with Him ;
Restore your soul with stillness, as is meet.
And when the sun bids forth, haste not to shew
Your strength ; but kneel for blessing, ere you go ;
And meekly bind the sandals on your feet.

THOMAS ASHE.

AFTER COMMUNION.



WHY should I call Thee Lord, Who art my God?
Why should I call Thee Friend, Who art
my Love?

Or King, Who art my very Spouse above?
Or call Thy Sceptre on my heart Thy rod?

Lo, now Thy banner over me is love,
All heaven flies open to me at Thy nod :
For Thou hast lit Thy flame in me a clod,
Made me a nest for dwelling of Thy Dove.

What wilt Thou call me in our home above,
Who now hast called me friend ? how will it be
When Thou for good wine settest forth the best ?
Now Thou dost bid me come and sup with Thee,
Now Thou dost make me lean upon Thy breast :
How will it be with me in time of love?

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

A DISCIPLE.



MASTER, they argued fast concerning Thee,
Proved what Thou art, denied what Thou art
not,

Till brows were on the fret, and eyes grew hot,
And lip and chin were thrust out eagerly ;
Then through the temple-door I slipped to free
My soul from secret ache in solitude,
And sought this brook, and by the brookside stood
The world's Light, and the Light and Life of me.
It is enough, O Master, speak no word !
The stream speaks, and the endurance of the sky
Outpasses speech : I seek not to discern
Even what smiles for me Thy lips have stirred ;
Only in Thy hand still let my hand lie,
And let the musing soul within me burn.

EDWARD DOWDEN.

ANTINOUS CROWNED AS BACCHUS.

(In the British Museum.)

WHO crowned thy forehead with the ivy-wreath
And clustered berries burdening the hair?
Who gave thee godhood, and dim rites? Beware
O beautiful, who breathest mortal breath,
Thou delicate flame great gloom environeth!
The gods are free, and drink a stainless air,
And lightly on calm shoulders they upbear
A weight of joy eternal, nor can Death
Cast o'er their sleep the shadow of her shrine.
O thou confessed too mortal by the o'er-fraught
Crowned forehead, must thy drooped eyes ever see
The glut of pleasure, those pale lips of thine
Still suck a bitter-sweet satiety,
Thy soul descend through cloudy realms of thought?

EDWARD DOWDEN.

THE MODERN ELIJAH.



HAT went ye forth to see? a shaken reed?—

Ye throngers of the Parthenon last night.

Prophet, yea more than prophet, we agreed ;

No John a' Desert with the girdle tight,

And locusts and wild honey for his need,

Before the dreadful day appears in sight

Urging one word to make the conscience bleed,

But an obese John Smith, "a shining light "

(Our chairman felt), "an honour to his creed."

O by the gas, when buns and tea had wrought

Upon our hearts, how grew the Future bright,—

The Press, the Institutes, Advance of Thought,

And People's Books, till every mother's son

Can prove there is a God, or there is none.

EDWARD DOWDEN.

BROKEN MUSIC.



THE mother will not turn, who thinks she hears
Her nursling's speech first grow articulate ;
But breathless with averted eyes elate
She sits, with open lips and open ears,
That it may call her twice. 'Mid doubts and fears
Thus oft my soul has hearkened ; till the song,
A central moan for days, at length found tongue,
And the sweet music welled and the sweet tears.

But now, whatever while the soul is fain
To list that wonted murmur, as it were
The speech-bound sea-shell's low importunate strain,—
No breath of song, thy voice alone is there,
O bitterly beloved ! and all her gain
Is but the pang of unpermitted prayer.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

LOST DAYS.



THE lost days of my life until to-day,
What were they, could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay?
Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
The throats of men in Hell, who thirst alway?

I do not see them here; but after death
God knows I know the faces I shall see,
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath.
“I am thyself,—what hast thou done to me?”
“And I—and I—thyself,” (lo! each one saith,) .
“And thou thyself to all eternity!”

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

NEWBORN DEATH.

I.



O-DAY Death seems to me an infant child
Which her worn mother Life upon my knee
Has set to grow my friend and play with me ;
If haply so my heart might be beguil'd
To find no terrors in a face so mild,—
If haply so my weary heart might be
Unto the newborn milky eyes of thee,
O Death, before resentment reconcil'd.

How long, O Death ? And shall thy feet depart
Still a young child's with mine, or wilt thou stand
Fullgrown the helpful daughter of my heart,
What time with thee indeed I reach the strand
Of the pale wave which knows thee what thou art,
And drink it in the hollow of thy hand ?

II.



AND thou, O Life, the lady of all bliss,
With whom, when our first heart beat full and
fast,

I wandered till the haunts of men were pass'd,
And in fair places found all bowers amiss
Till only woods and waves might hear our kiss,
While to the winds all thought of Death we cast :—
Ah, Life ! and must I have from thee at last
No smile to greet me and no babe but this ?

Lo ! Love, the child once ours ; and Song, whose hair
Blew like a flame and blossomed like a wreath ;
And Art, whose eyes were worlds by God found fair ;
These o'er the book of Nature mixed their breath •
With neck-twined arms, as oft we watched them there :
And did these die that thou mightst bear me Death ?

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

THE SUN'S SHAME.



BEHOLDING youth and hope in mockery caught
From life ; and mocking pulses that remain
When the soul's death of bodily death is fain ;
Honour unknown, and honour known unsought ;
And penury's sedulous self-torturing thought
 On gold, whose master therewith buys his bane ;
 And longed-for woman longing all in vain
For lonely man with love's desire distraught ;
And wealth, and strength, and power, and pleasantness,
 Given unto bodies of whose souls men say,
 None poor and weak, slavish and foul, as they :—
Beholding these things, I behold no less
The blushing morn and blushing eve confess
 The shame that loads the intolerable day.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

IN ITHACA.



THIS thought Odysseus when the strife was o'er
With all the waves and wars, a weary while,
Grew restless in his disenchanted isle,
And still would watch the sunset, from the shore,
Go down the ways of gold, and evermore
His sad heart followed after, mile on mile,
Back to the Goddess of the magic wile,
Calypso, and the love that was of yore.

Thou too, thy haven gained, must turn thee yet
To look across the sad and stormy space,
Years of a youth as bitter as the sea,
Ah, with a heavy heart, and eyelids wet,
Because, within a fair forsaken place
The life that might have been is lost to thee.

ANDREW LANG.



KNOW a maiden with a laughing face,
And springing feet like wings ;—the light that
flies

Forth from the radiant dancing of her eyes,
Is full of mischievous and mirthful grace.
I know a maiden you might scarce think fair
The first time that across your path she pass'd,
And suddenly you would be fettered fast
In the thick meshes of her chestnut hair,
And in her floating motions gay and glad,
And in the sparkling triumph of her mirth :
Like summer rain-showers twinkling to the earth,
Through sudden sun-gleams, when the sky is sad,
When all the shrubberies rock in rustling glee,
And clouds of blossoms fall from every tree.

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.

A LOVER TO HIS MISTRESS.



H make not light of love, my lady dear,
 For, from that sweetest source doth ever flow
 All that is likest heaven on earth below.

Ill it beseems, who worthiest love appear,
 To scoff at their own worship ;—if to you
 All that a serving soul, tender and true,
 Can bring of best and holiest offering,
 Seems but a slight and unregarded thing—
 Then are you, with your grace and loveliness,
 A wicked phantom, with an evil spell,
 Luring warm human hearts to a cold hell,
 Where in a barren, blighted emptiness,
 Self-love and vanity together dwell ;
 Companions curst, cruel, and comfortless.

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.

ECHO.



THOU restless voice! that wandering up and down
These forest paths, where for this many a day,
I come to dream the summer hours away—
Mak'st answer to my voice with mocking tone,
Echo! thou air-born child of harmony,
How oft in sunny field, or shadowy wood,
By lone hill-side, or cavern-cradled flood,
Have I held laughing converse, nymph, with thee.
This is thy dwelling, and along the wide
Oak-woven halls, that stretch on every side,
Murmuring sweet lullabies, I hear thee stray,
Hushing the dim-eyed Twilight, who all day,
From searching sunbeams hid in these cool bowers,
Sleeps on a bed of pale, night-blowing flowers.

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.

A MATCH WITH THE MOON.



WEARY already, weary miles to-night

I walked for bed : and so, to get some ease,

I dogged the flying moon with similes.

And like a wisp she doubled on my sight

In ponds ; and caught in tree-tops like a kite ;

And in a globe of film all vapourish

Swam full-faced like a silly silver fish ;—

Last like a bubble shot the welkin's height

Where my road turned, and got behind me, and sent

My wizened shadow craning round at me,

And jeered, ' So, step the measure,—one two three !'—

And if I faced on her, looked innocent.

But just at parting, halfway down a dell,

She kissed me for good-night. So you'll not tell.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

TO HELEN.



MOMENTARY wish passed through my brain,
To be the monarch of a magic place
Thick-sown with burning gems, or to constrain
The uncouth help of some half-demon race,
Vexing the pearl-paved hollows of the main
For thee, and starry caverns in far space.
It was a wish unwisely formed, and vain ;
Even in the humblest trifles love can trace
That which no mine can give, no Genii's wing
From depths beneath or heights above can bring ;
The memories of each kind look and tone,
Gestures, and glancing smiles, into the gift
Pass like a living spirit, and uplift
Its value, to the level of their own.

SIR FRANCIS HASTINGS DOYLE.

ON READING SOME AMERICAN POETRY.

HIGH strains and pure, worthy to live and shine
 By their own light hereafter, still in these
 I find not what I sought, ye ancient seas,
 And matchless rivers, forests of dark pine,
 And of each tree that fires the autumn breeze
 With myriad quivering colours, bright as gold,
 Maple and beech, and leagues of clustering vine,
 Round huge hill-shrouding oaks, that have grown old
 Unmarked, save by the changeless stars divine,
 There come from you no solemn presences
 Shaping the hearts of men—no spirit glides
 From the vast woods at night, no marvellous dreams
 Flow from the sullen shade, in whom abides
 The sceptre of the ever-sounding streams.

SIR FRANCIS H. DOYLE.

THE STREET.



THEY pass me by like shadows, crowds on crowds,
Dim ghosts of men, that hover to and fro,
Hugging their bodies round them like thin
shrouds,

Wherein their souls were buried long ago :
They trampled on their youth, and faith, and love,
They cast their hope of human-kind away,
With Heaven's clear messages they madly strove,
And conquered,—and their spirits turned to clay :
Lo ! how they wander round the world, their grave,
Whose ever-gaping maw by such is fed,
Gibbering at living men, and idly rave,
“ We, only, truly live, but ye are dead.”
Alas ! poor fools, the anointed eye may trace
A dead soul's epitaph in every face !

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

“NON DOLET.”



It does not hurt. She looked along the knife
Smiling, and watched the thick drops mix
and run

Down the sheer blade ; not that which had been done
Could hurt the sweet sense of the Roman wife,
But that which was to do yet ere the strife
Could end for each for ever, and the sun :
Nor was the palm yet nor was peace yet won
While pain had power upon her husband's life.

It does not hurt, Italia. Thou art more
Than bride to bridegroom ; how shalt thou not take
The gift love's blood has reddened for thy sake ?
Was not thy lifeblood given for us before ?
And if love's heartblood can avail thy need,
And thou not die, how should it hurt indeed ?

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

EURYDICE.

TO VICTOR HUGO.



ORPHEUS, the night is full of tears and cries
And hardly for the storm and ruin shed
Can even thine eyes be certain of her head
Who never passed out of thy spirit's eyes,
But stood and shone before them in such wise
As when with love her lips and hands were fed,
And with mute mouth out of the dusty dead
Strove to make answer when thou bad'st her rise.

Yet viper-stricken must her lifeblood feel
The fang that stung her sleeping, the foul germ
Even when she wakes of hell's most poisonous worm,
Though now it writhe beneath her wounded heel.
Turn yet, she will not fade nor fly from thee ;
Wait, and see hell yield up Eurydice.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

ON A LUTE FOUND IN A SARCOPHAGUS.



HAT curled and scented sun-girls, almond-eyed,
With lotus-blossoms in their hands and hair,
Have made their swarthy lovers call them fair,
With these spent strings, when brutes were deified,
And Memnon in the sunrise sprang and cried,
And love-winds smote Bubastis, and the bare
Black breasts of carven Pasht received the prayer
Of suppliants bearing gifts from far and wide !
This lute has out-sung Egypt ; all the lives
Of violent passion, and the vast calm art
That lasts in granite only, all lie dead ;
This little bird of song alone survives,
As fresh as when its fluting smote the heart
Last time the brown slave wore it garlanded.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

THE TOMB OF SOPHOCLES.



BOUNDING satyr, golden in the beard,
That leaps with goat-feet high into the air,
And crushes from the thyme an odour rare,
Keeps watch around the marble tomb revered
Of Sophocles, the poet loved and feared,
Whose mighty voice once called out of her lair
The Dorian muse severe, with braided hair,
Who loved the thyrsus and wild dances weird.
Here all day long the pious bees can pour
Libations of their honey ; round this tomb
The Dionysiac ivy loves to roam ;
The satyr laughs ; but He awakes no more,
Wrapped up in silence at the grave's cold core,
Nor sees the sun wheel round in the white dome.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

THE VENUS OF MELOS.



ODDESS, or woman nobler than the God,
No eyes a-gaze upon Ægean seas
Shifting and circling past their Cyclades
Saw thee. The Earth, the gracious earth, was trod
First by thy feet, while round thee lay her broad
Calm harvests, and great kine, and shadowing trees,
And flowers like queens, and a full year's increase,
Clusters, ripe berry, and the bursting pod.
So thy victorious fairness, unallied
To bitter things or barren, doth bestow
And not exact ; so thou art calm and wise ;
Thy large allurements saves ; a man may grow
Like Plutarch's men by standing at thy side,
And walk thenceforward with clear-visioned eyes !

EDWARD DOWDEN.

ROSSINI.



THE ghostly wind of Weber's northern pines,
With its luxurious dread, ne'er haunted thee ;
Maddening the heart like bright Circean wines,
Thy siren songs float o'er the sunlit sea ;
Thy Faun-like childhood caught a Pagan glee
From mellow clusters, bending trellised vines
In some warm Tuscan vale, where sunset shines
On vintage dance and jocund minstrelsy.
If life were but a Bacchanal procession
Of sensuous joys, thou wert its great high-priest,
Old Pan of music, who, half-god, half-beast,
On the shy nymph of tears mak'st bold aggression :
Yet in thy bowers we sit at endless feast,
And of thy gorgeous realm take rich possession.

JOHN TODHUNTER.

ON THE WING.



ONCE in a dream (for once I dreamed of you)
We stood together in an open field ;
Above our heads two swift-winged pigeons
wheeled,
Sporting at ease and courting full in view.
When loftier still a broadening darkness flew,
Down-swooping, and a ravenous hawk revealed ;
Too weak to fight, too fond to fly, they yield ;
So farewell life and love and pleasures new.
Then as their plumes fell fluttering' to the ground,
Their snow-white plumage flecked with crimson drops,
I wept, and thought I turned towards you to weep :
But you were gone ; while rustling hedgerow tops
Bent in a wind which bore to me a sound
Of far-off piteous bleat of lambs and sheep.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

LOCH KATRINE.



OW, through the Trosachs' gorge, from sweet
 Achray,
 On Katrine launched, we wheel round
 "Ellen's Isle,"

Sky, forest, mountain, mirrored calm the while ;
 Foretaste of quiet course past cape and bay ;—
 With pensive heart-notes to the Minstrel's Lay,

Gauging the secrets of each deep defile,
 And scanning Benvenue's imperial pile ;
 Guerçons of gladdened eyes throughout the day.

But hark ! that cheery music in the breeze,
 And scud of hound and horse our silence mock ;

See ! like a grove of bare autumnal trees,
 How clattering antlers crest yon lofty rock.

Nay, 'twas a dream, of olden centuries born,
 When blithe Strathgartney hailed the stag-hunt's horn.

THOMAS AGAR HOLLAND.

MOUNT GLAMAIG, ISLE OF SKYE.



HE smoke as of a sacrifice all day
Crowned green Glamaig, which, like an altar
vast,
Lifts its huge tapering front to meet the blast,
For ever circled with a cloud-wreath grey.
But from the West was flung one parting ray,
Ere the dim evening into darkness pass'd :
The altar-smoke burst into flame at last,
And in a blaze of glory died away.
Thus, round Heaven-pointing lives, which altar-wise
Send up pure incense, gathering mists may rest,
And clouds of various trouble veil their skies :
But lo ! at evening-time they shall be blest :
For them a sunset-glory shall arise,
And shafts of splendour smite them from the West.

RICHARD WILTON.


PUBLIC OPINION.



IF Conscience be sole regent of man's soul,
Whose thoughts and will are but her ministers,
Needs must she disallow the enforced control
Of thoughts she thinks not, and of wills not hers.
This Soul-made Conscience is a Queen, whose cold
Strict sceptre rules her hidden realm, alone ;
That Crowd-made Conscience is a harlot bold,
That own'd by many, yet is no man's own ;
This Conscience is responsible for one ;
That Conscience irresponsible for any ;
Wrong done by all men is the deed of none ;
That's no man's virtue which is made by many :
Since, therefore, God no Corporate Soul hath made,
How shall this Corporate Conscience be obey'd ?

ROBERT, EARL LYTTON.

DUTY.

OW like a trumpet from the sentinel
Angel, that standeth in the morning star
Empanoplied and plumed, as angels are
Whom God doth charge to watch that all be well,
Cometh to me thy call, O terrible,
That, girt, and crown'd and sworded for Heaven's war,
Standest supreme above the confused jar
Of shock'd antagonisms, and the yell
Of trampled Pain ! Thou of the solemn eyes,
Firm-fronted Duty, on whose high Command
My heart waits awed, stretch forth thy harness'd hand,
And with a louder summons bid arise
My soul to battle. Hark, the muster roll !
Thy name is call'd. Forth, thou poor conscript soul !

ROBERT, EARL LYTTON.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.



WHEN the scared mariners by Paxos' coast,
Heard, in the lull, the lamentable cry
Proclaiming Pan was dead, did they deny
Or disbelieve the news that all was lost ?
No ! though had vanished all they valued most,
They boldly steered beneath the midnight sky,
And followed, with a flowing sheet, where high
The Star of Bethlehem o'erode the host
Of spangled heaven ; and there, behold ! they found
A brighter God, who, in the straw, unfurled
A more transcendent banner, and was crowned
Thenceforth to be the Sovereign of the world !
But if another midnight voice should mar,
Where shall we find another guiding star ?

PHILIP ACTON.

EVERY-DAY RELIGION.



NOT alway 'mid the blaze of Sinai's height
 Went forth the word ; and to the prophet mind
 Above the fire, the earthquake, and the wind
 That still small voice maintained its heavenly might.
 He too that once in godliest garb of light
 Before the chosen three transfigured shone
 Did, also toward Emmaus journeying on,
 Talk by the way, and then they learnt aright.
 Hence in no high sequestered world of thought
 Where only angels soar our worship lies,
 But on whatever field the fight be fought,
 On this vexed earth where man yet lives and dies,
 There, morn by morn, God's benison may be sought,
 And duty fitly done best wins the skies.

ALSAGER HAY HILL.

SUBSTANCE AND SHADOW.



THEY do but grope in learning's pedant round,
Who on the fantasies of sense bestow
An idol substance, bidding us bow low
Before those shades of being which are found,
Stirring or still, on man's brief trial-ground ;
As if such shapes and moods, which come and go,
Had aught of Truth or Life in their poor show,
To sway or judge, and skill to save or wound.
Son of immortal seed, high-destined Man !
Know thy dread gift,—a creature, yet a cause :
Each mind is its own centre, and it draws
Home to itself, and moulds in its thought's span
All outward things, the vassals of its will,
Aided by Heaven, by earth unthwarted still.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.



COUNT each affliction, whether light or grave,
God's messenger sent down to thee ; do thou
With courtesy receive him ; rise and bow ;
And, ere his shadow pass thy threshold, crave
Permission first his heavenly feet to lave ;
Then lay before him all thou hast ; allow
No cloud of passion to usurp thy brow,
Or mar thy hospitality ; no wave
Of mortal tumult to obliterate
The soul's marmoreal calmness : Grief should be
Like joy, majestic, equable, sedate ;
Confirming, cleansing, raising, making free ;
Strong to consume small troubles ; to commend
Great thoughts, grave thoughts, thoughts lasting to the end.

AUBREY DE VERE.



OUR course is onward, onward into light :
What though the darkness gathereth amain,
Yet to return or tarry, both are vain,
How tarry, when around us is thick night ?
Whither return ? what flower yet ever might,
In days of gloom and cold and stormy rain,
Enclose itself in its green bud again,
Hiding from wrath of tempest out of sight ?
Courage—we travel through a darksome cave ;
But still as nearer to the light we draw,
Fresh gales will reach us from the upper air,
And wholesome dews of heaven our foreheads lave,
The darkness lighten more, till full of awe
We stand in the open sunshine unaware.

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH.



WHAT is thy worship but a vain pretence,
Spirit of beauty, and a servile trade,
A poor and an unworthy traffic made
With the most sacred gifts of soul and sense ;
If they who tend thine altars, gathering thence
No strength, no purity may still remain
Selfish and dark, and from life's sordid stain
Find in their ministrations no defence ?
Thus many times I ask, when aught of mean
Or sensual has been brought unto mine ear,
Of them whose calling high is to insphere
Eternal beauty in forms of human art—
Vexed that my soul should ever moved have been
By that which has such feigning at the heart.

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH.

THE HERRING-FISHERS OF LOCHFYNE.



SEEM not these fishers idle, though by day
You hear the snatches of their lazy song,
And see them listlessly the sunlight long
Strew the curved beach of this indented bay :
So deemed I, till I viewed their trim array
Of boats last night,—a busy armament,
With sails as dark as that Athenian bent
Upon his fatal rigging, take their way.
Rising betimes, I could not choose but look
For their return ; and when along the lake
The morning mists were curling, saw them make
Homeward, returning toward their quiet nook,
With draggled nets down hanging to the tide,
Weary, and leaning o'er their vessel's side.

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH.

PETRARCA.



NOT vainly didst thou sing, thy lifetime long,
Petrarca, of a fair and gentle dame ;
And with the winds fan love's enduring flame ;
Wandering the hills and the quick streams among ;
For Time hath listened to thy passionate song ;
Whose years like pilgrims to Valchiusa came ;
Sighing thou wentest all thy days ; but Fame
Filled her clear trump with thine imagined wrong.
Then from the banks of that Provençal river,
Soared loftier accents, 'neath the Alps' blue gleam ;
And at thy voice rose one, who would deliver
His Rome and thine ; oh noble poet-dream :
The Belisarian weeds did stir and shiver
On her old walls, at that electric theme.

JOHN, LORD HANMER.

A NIGHT ON THE GENOESE RIVIERA.



LANNED by sweet airs the road along the cliff
Wound in the moonlight, glistening now, now
dim ;

So winds a silver snake in pale relief
Girdling a sacrificial beaker's brim :
Black rocks loomed forth in giant hieroglyph
O'er silken seas : amid their shadows grim
From lowly town dim-lit, or dancing skiff,
At times the song was borne, at times the hymn.
Star after star adown the blue vault sliding
Their bright hair washed successive in the wave,
Till morning, from her far purpureal cave
Issuing, and o'er the foamless billows gliding,
Leaped, as the bells rang out from tower and shrine,
Up from her sea-bath to the hills of pine.

AUBREY DE VERE.

THE FIUMARA.



HEY say that river, now beneath the sun
Spreading his waste of shingle, broad and bare,
With clear green pools in the shadow here and
there,

Doth in the winter like a deluge run ;
And not with streams that since the world begun
Were loved or glorious, doth he fear compare ;
So wildly do his nymphs their beryl hair
Toss up and down, nor sight then coyly shun.

And by his rising, so doth fame report,
Far flying as the rack in those loud days,
The chorus of the Mænades remain ;

For on his waves come trophies of their sport,
Ivy, and trees uprooted, pines, and bays,
And evermore a fierce exulting strain.

JOHN, LORD HANMER.

THE POETRY OF LIFE.



DIAN ! thy brother of the golden beams
Is hailed for ever as the Lord of Song,
Master of manly verse, and mystic dreams :—
Doth, then, no female lyre to thee belong ?
Say, is that pearly bow whose crescent gleams,
Above black pine-woods lifted, or low hung
'Twixt hornèd rocks, or troubling midnight streams,
With immelodious chord, and silent, strung ?
Ah no, not so ! Thou too art musical !
The world is full of poetry unwrit ;
Dew-woven nets that virgin hearts enthrall,
Darts of glad thought through infant brains that flit,
Hope and pursuit, loved bounds and fancies free—
Poor were our earth of these bereft and thee !

AUBREY DE VERE.

ENAMORED ARCHITECT OF AIRY RHYME.



ENAMORED architect of airy rhyme,

Build as thou wilt ; heed not what each man
says.

Good souls, but innocent of dreamers' ways,
Will come, and marvel why thou wastest time ;
Others, beholding how thy turrets climb
'Twixt theirs and heaven, will hate thee all their days ;
But most beware of those who come to praise.
O Wondersmith, O worker in sublime
And heaven-sent dreams, let art be all in all ;
Build as thou wilt, unspoiled by praise or blame,
Build as thou wilt, and as thy light is given :
Then, if at last the airy structure fall,
Dissolve and vanish—take thyself no shame.
They fail, and they alone, who have not striven.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

LOVE'S QUEST.



LOVE walks with weary feet the upward way,
Love without joy and led by suffering ;
Love's unkissed lips have now no song to sing,
Love's eyes are blind and cannot see the day,
Love walks in utter darkness, and I say ;
 " Oh, Love, 'tis summer," or, " Behold the spring,"
 Or, " Love, 'tis autumn, and leaves withering,"
And " Now it is the winter bleak and gray,"
And still Love heedeth not. " Oh, Love," I cry,
 " Wilt thou not rest ? the path is over steep ;"
Love answers not, but passeth all things by ;
 Nor will he stay, for those who laugh or weep.
I follow Love who follows Grief ; but lo,
Where the way ends, not Love himself can know.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

UNCONFESSED WORSHIP.



YOU worship God ; I fail to recognize
 In aught the God you worship, but I see
 How broken-hearted you wait patiently
 Upon His will, and deem that He replies
 In mercy to your sharp and passionate cries.
 You worship Art, a fair divinity ;
 And you, your God is holy Liberty ;
 Enduring as the ocean and the skies :
 And all the worship of my soul is given
 To her, whose life these songs commemorate.
 Yet, if indeed, there should be God and heaven ;
 By loving solely what is pure and great—
 All that we deem in life is loveliest,
 Is not all worship His, though unconfessed ?

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

COMING AND GOING.



IN the bright margin of the salt sea tide,
Flooding the sands, his tiny shallop tries
A boy, with new delights in his clear eyes ;
Wading far in and watching it with pride
Tacking, returning, as the wavelets guide ;
Until the ebb set in unknown to him,
And then across the seas into the dim
Green waste he saw his little frigate ride !

Will it sail on for ever and a day,
Or will they hail it from some new strange land ?
Why went it from me at the last away ?
He asked, and empty-handed turned to go.
And often wandering on life's wave-worn strand,
Perplexed, he questions still that ebb and flow.

WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.

AFTER DEATH.



THE curtains were half drawn, the floor was swept
And strewn with rushes, rosemary and may
Lay thick upon the bed on which I lay,
Where through the lattice ivy-shadows crept.
He leaned above me, thinking that I slept
And could not hear him ; but I heard him say :
‘ Poor child, poor child ! ’ and as he turned away
Came a deep silence, and I knew he wept.
He did not touch the shroud, or raise the fold
That hid my face, or take my hand in his,
Or ruffle the smooth pillows for my head :
He did not love me living ; but once dead
He pitied me ; and very sweet it is
To know he still is warm, though I am cold.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

IN MORTEM F. D. MAURICE.



O day by day my life, thus nearer drawn
Down the dark avenues unto the dawn,
Cries to Thee : O Lord, Lord of life and death,
Whom from our gaze the sad night sundereth,
Reveal Thyself ; be unto us no more
A darkly felt thick darkness by the shore ;
But like the wind, that wingeth cold and clear
Before the dawn by meadow-land and mere,
Blow on us ; scatter from our sickly brains
The feverish fancies that ill conscience feigns ;
Raise us to stand like men to meet the strife,
Fearless and grand, because within Thy life
Our lives are hidden,—as is his to-day,
Thy servant who from sight hath passed away.

EDWARD CARPENTER.

IMMORTALITY.



O when the old delight is born anew
 And God re-animates the early bliss
 Seems it not all as one first trembling kiss
 Ere soul knew soul with whom she has to do?
 'O nights how desolate, O days how few,
 O death in life, if life be this, be this!
 O weighed alone as one shall win or miss
 The faint eternity which shines therethro'!
 Lo all that age is as a speck of sand
 Lost on the long beach where the tides are free,
 And no man metes it in his hollow hand
 Nor cares to ponder it, how small it be;
 At ebb it lies forgotten on the land
 And at full tide forgotten in the sea.'

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS.

IN THE LOUVRE.



DINGY picture : others passed it by
Without a second glance. To me it seemed
Mine somehow, yet I knew not how, nor why:
It hid some mystic thing I once had dreamed,
As I suppose. A palace-porch there stood,
With massy pillars and long front, where gleamed
Most precious sculptures ; but all scarred and seamed
By ruining Time. There, in a sullen mood,
A man was pacing o'er the desolate floor
Of weedy marble ; and the bitter waves
Of the encroaching sea crawled to his feet,
Gushing round tumbled blocks. I coned it o'er.
'Age-mouldering creeds !' said I. 'A dread sea raves
To overwhelm the temples of our fond conceit.'

JOHN TODHUNTER.

A CHRYSALIS.



WHEN gathering shells cast upwards by the waves
Of Progress, they who note its ebb and flow,
Its flux and re-flux, surely come to know
That the sea-level rises ; that dark caves
Of ignorance are flooded, and foul graves
Of sin are cleansed ; albeit the work is slow ;
Till, seeing great from less for ever grow,
Law comes to mean for them the Love that saves !
And leaning down the ages, my dull ear,
Catching their slow-ascending harmonies,
I am uplift of them, and borne more near,
I feel within my flesh—laid pupa-wise—
A soul of worship, tho' of vision dim,
Which links me with wing-folded cherubim.

EMILY PFEIFFER.



WE live not in our moments or our years :
The present we fling from us like the rind
Of some sweet Future which we after find
Bitter to taste, or bind *that* in with fears,
And water it beforehand with our tears—
Vain tears for that which never may arrive :
Meanwhilc the joy whereby we ought to live
Neglected or unheeded, disappears.
Wiser it were to welcome and make ours
Whate'er of good, though small, the present brings—
Kind greetings, sunshine, song of birds, and flowers,
With a child's pure delight in little things ;
And of the griefs unborn to rest secure,
Knowing that mercy ever will endure.

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH.



T may be that our homeward longings made
 That other lands were judged with partial eyes;
 But fairer in my sight the mottled skies,
 With pleasant interchange of sun and shade,
 And more desired the meadow and deep glade
 Of sylvan England, green with frequent showers,
 Than all the beauty which the vaunted bowers
 Of the parched South have in mine eyes displayed ;
 Fairer and more desired !—this well might be,
 For let the South have beauty's utmost dower
 And yet my heart might well have turned to thee,
 My home, my country, when a delicate flower
 Within thy pleasant borders was for me
 Tended, and growing up thro' sun and shower.

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM.



IS not by action only, not by deed,
Though that be just and holy, pure and wise,
That man may to his last perfection rise ;
Of suffering as of doing he has need :
Thus prospers with due change the heavenly seed,
While stormy night succeeds to sunny day :
Thus the good metal, proven every way,
From the last dross that clung to it is freed.
And thus for thee, O glorious man, on whom
Love well-deserved, and honour waited long,
In thy last years, in place of timely ease,
There did remain another loftier doom,
Pain, travail, exile, peril, scorn and wrong—
Glorious before, but glorified through these.

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH.



WRETCHED thing it were, to have our heart
Like a broad highway or a populous street,
Where every idle thought has leave to meet,
Pause, or pass on as in an open mart ;
Or like some road-side pool, which no nice art
Has guarded that the cattle may not beat
And foul it with a multitude of feet,
Till of the heavens it can give back no part.
But keep thou thine a holy solitude,
For He who would walk there, would walk alone ;
He who would drink there, must be first endued
With single right to call that stream His own ;
Keep thou thine heart, close fastened, unrevealed,
A fenced garden and a fountain sealed.

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH.



BLESSED is he who hath not trod the ways
Of secular delight, nor learned the lore
Which loftier minds are studious to abhor ;
Blessed is he who hath not sought the praise
That perishes, the rapture that betrays ;
Who hath not spent in Time's vainglorious war
His youth ; and found, a schoolboy at fourscore,
How fatal are those victories which raise
Their iron trophies to a temple's height
On trampled Justice ; who desires not bliss,
But peace ; and yet when summoned to the fight,
Combats as one who combats in the sight
Of God and of His Angels, seeking this
Alone, how blest to glorify the right.

AUBREY DE VERE.

HUMAN LIFE.



AD is our youth, for it is ever going,
 Crumbling away beneath our very feet ;
 Sad is our life, for onward it is flowing,
 In current unperceived because so fleet ;
 Sad are our hopes, for they were sweet in sowing,
 But tares, self-sown, have overtopped the wheat ;
 Sad are our joys, for they were sweet in blowing ;
 And still, O still, their dying breath is sweet :
 And sweet is youth, although it hath bereft us
 Of that which made our childhood sweeter still ;
 And sweet our life's decline, for it hath left us
 A nearer Good to cure an older Ill ;
 And sweet are all things, when we learn to prize them
 Not for their sake, but His who grants them or denies them.

AUBREY DE VERE.



THOU art before me, and I see no more
Pilate or soldiers, but the purple flung
Around the naked form the scourge had wrung,
To naked Truth thus witnessing, before
The False and trembling True. As on the shore
Of infinite Love and Truth, I kneel among
Thy footprints on that pavement ; and my tongue
Would, but for reverence, cry : “ If Thou set'st store
“ By feeble homage, Witness to the Truth,
“ Thou art the King, crowned by thy witnessing ! ”
I die in soul, and fall down worshipping.
Art glories vanish, vapours of the morn.
Never but Thee was there a man in sooth,
Never a true crown but thy crown of thorn.

GEORGE MACDONALD.



H, God ! the world needs many hours to make ;
Nor hast Thou ceased the making of it yet,
But wilt be working on when Death hath set
A new mound in some churchyard for my sake.
On flow the centuries without a break.
Uprise the mountains, ages without let.
The mosses suck the rock's breast, rarely wet.
Years more than past, the young earth yet will take.
But in the dumbness of the rolling time,
No veil of silence will encompass me—
Thou wilt not once forget, and let me be :
I easier think that Thou, as I my rhyme,
Wouldst rise, and with a tenderness sublime
Unfold a world, that I, Thy child, might see.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

WHEN WE ARE ALL ASLEEP.



WHEN He returns, and finds the World so drear—
 All sleeping,—young and old, unfair and fair,
 Will He stoop down and whisper in each ear,
 ‘Awaken!’ or for pity’s sake forbear,—
 Saying, ‘How shall I meet their frozen stare
 Of wonder, and their eyes so full of fear?
 How shall I comfort them in their despair,
 If they cry out, “Too late! let us sleep here”?’
 Perchance He will not wake us up, but when
 He sees us look so happy in our rest,
 Will murmur, ‘Poor dead women and dead men!
 Dire was their doom, and weary was their quest.
 Wherefore awake them unto life again?
 Let them sleep on untroubled—it is best.’

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

THE HAPPY HEARTS OF EARTH.



HENCE thou hast come, thou knowest not,
 little Brook,
Nor whither thou art bound. Yet wild and gay,
Pleased in thyself, and pleasing all that look,
 Thou wendest, all the seasons, on thy way ;
 The lonely glen grows gladsome with thy play,
Thou glidest lamb-like through the ghostly shade ;
To think of solemn things thou wast not made,
 But to sing on, for pleasure, night and day.
Such happy hearts are wandering, crystal clear,
 In the great world where men and women dwell ;
Earth's mighty shows they neither love nor fear,
 They are content to be, while I rebel,
Out of their own delight dispensing cheer,
 And ever softly whispering, ' All is well !'

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

A VOICE IN THE WHIRLWIND.



HEARD a Whirlwind on the mountain peak
 Pause for a space its furious flight and cry—
 ‘There is no Death!’ loudly it seemed to
 shriek ;

‘Nothing that is, beneath the sun, shall die.’
 The frail sick Vapours echoed, drifting by—
 ‘There is no Death, but change early and late ;
 Powerless were God’s right Hand, full arm’d with fate,
 To slay the meanest thing beneath the sky.’
 Yea, even as tremulous foam-bells on the sea,
 Coming and going, are all things of breath ;
 But evermore, deathless, and bright, and free,
 We re-emerge, in spite of Change or Death.
 Harken, O Mountains ! Waters, echo me !
 O wild Wind, echo what the Man-Wind saith !

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

THE UNIVERSE VOID.



EVOLVING worlds, revolving systems, yea,
Revolving firmaments, nor there we end :
Systems of firmaments revolving, send

Our thought across the Infinite astray,
Gasping and lost and terrified, the day
Of life, the goodly interests of home,
Shrivelled to nothing ; that unbounded dome
Peeling still on, in blind fatality.

No rest is there for our soul's wingèd feet,
She must return for shelter to her ark—
The body, fair, frail, death-born, incomplete,
And let her bring this truth back from the dark :
Life is self-centred, man is nature's god ;
Space, time, are but the walls of his abode.

WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.

THE MOTION OF THE MISTS.



HERE by the sunless Lake there is no air,
Yet with how ceaseless motion, like a shower
Flowing and fading, do the high Mists lower
Amid the gorges of the Mountains bare.
Some weary breathing never ceases there,—
The barren peaks can feel it hour by hour ;
The purple depths are darkened by its power ;
A soundless breath, a trouble all things share
That feel it come and go. See ! onward swim
The ghostly Mists, from silent land to land,
From gulf to gulf ; now the whole air grows dim—
Like living men, darkling a space, they stand,
But lo ! a Sunbeam, like the Cherubim,
Scatters them onward with a flaming brand.

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

SELF-DECEPTION.



HERE'S a Seer's peak on Ararat, they say,
 From which we can descry the better world ;
 Not that supernal kingdom whence were hurled
 The rebel-angels ere Creation's day,
 But Eden-garden, Adam's first array,
 Round which the Flood-waves stood back like a
 wall,
 And whither still are sent the souls of all
 The good dead, where the cherubim sing and play.

Dear lovely land we wait for and desire,
 Whence fondly-loved lost faces look back still,
 Waiting for us, so distant and apart ;
 But from the depth between what mists aspire—
 What wrinkled sea rolls severing hill from hill—
 Vision ! 'tis but a reflex of the heart !

WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.

THE ODYSSEY.



As one that for a weary space has lain
Lulled by the song of Circe and her wine
In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
Where that Ææan isle forgets the main,
And only the low lutes of love complain,
And only shadows of wan lovers pine,
As such an one were glad to know the brine
Salt on his lips, and the large air again,
So gladly, from the songs of modern speech
Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers,
And through the music of the languid hours,
They hear like ocean on a western beach
The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.

ANDREW LANG.

VENICE.



WHITE swan of cities, slumbering in thy nest
So wonderfully built among the reeds
Of the lagoon, that fences thee and feeds,
As sayeth thy old historian and thy guest !
White water-lily, cradled and caressed
By ocean streams, and from the silt and weeds
Lifting thy golden pistils with their seeds,
Thy sun-illuminated spires, thy crown and crest !
White phantom city, whose untrodden streets
Are rivers, and whose pavements are the shifting
Shadows of palaces and strips of sky ;
I wait to see thee vanish like the fleets
Seen in mirage, or towers of cloud uplifting
In air their unsubstantial masonry.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

RACHEL.

(1.)



IN Paris all look'd hot and like to fade ;
 Brown, in the garden of the Tuileries,
 Brown with September, droop'd the chestnut
 trees.

'Twas dawn ; a brougham roll'd through the streets, and
 made

Halt at the white and silent colonnade
 Of the French Theatre. Worn with disease,
 Rachel, with eyes no gazing can appease,
 Sate in the brougham, and those blank walls survey'd.

She follows the gay world, whose swarms have fled
 To Switzerland, to Baden, to the Rhine ;
 Why stops she by this empty play-house drear ?

Ah, where the spirit its highest life hath led,
 All spots, match'd with that spot, are less divine ;
 And Rachel's Switzerland, her Rhine, is here !

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

RACHEL.

(II.)



UNTIL a lonely villa, in a dell
Above the fragrant warm Provençal shore,
The dying Rachel in a chair they bore
Up the steep pine-plumed paths of the Estrelle,
And laid her in a stately room, where fell
The shadow of a marble Muse of yore—
The rose-crown'd queen of legendary lore,
Polymnia—full on her death-bed.—'Twas well !
The fret and misery of our northern towns,
In this her life's last day, our poor, our pain,
Our jangle of false wits, our climate's frowns,
Do for this radiant Greek-soul'd artist cease ;
Sole object of her dying eyes remain
The beauty and the glorious art of Greece.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

RACHEL.

(III.)



STRUNG from the blood of Israel's scatter'd race,
At a mean inn in German Aarau born,
To forms from antique Greece and Romeuptorn,
Trick'd out with a Parisian speech and face,

Imparting life renew'd, old classic grace ;
Then soothing with thy Christian strain forlorn,
A-Kempis ! her departing soul outworn,
While by her bedside Hebrew rites have place—

Ah, not the radiant spirit of Greece alone
She had—one power, which made her breast its home !
In her, like us, there clash'd contending powers,

Germany, France, Christ, Moses, Athens, Rome.
The strife, the mixture in her soul, are ours ;
Her genius and her glory are her own.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

TO —



ET Fate or Insufficiency provide

Mean ends for men who what they are would be :

Penn'd in their narrow day, no change they see

Save one which strikes the blow to brutes and pride.

Our faith is ours and comes not on a tide :

And whether earth's great offspring, by decree,

Must rot if they abjure rapacity,

Not argument but effort shall decide.

They number many heads in that hard flock :

Trim swordsmen they push forth : yet try thy steel.

Thou, fighting for poor humankind, wilt feel

The strength of Roland in thy wrist to hew

A chasm sheer into the barrier rock,

And bring the army of the faithful through.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

ARMAND BARBÈS.

(1.)



IRE out of heaven, a flower of perfect fire,
That where the roots of life are had its root
And where the fruits of time are brought forth
fruit ;
A faith made flesh, a visible desire,
That heard the yet unbreathing years respire
And speech break forth of centuries that sit mute
Beyond all feebler footprint of pursuit ;
That touched the highest of hope, and went up higher ;
A heart love-wounded whereto love was law,
A soul reproachless without fear or flaw,
A shining spirit without shadow of shame,
A memory made of all men's love and awe ;
Being disembodied, so thou be the same,
What need, O soul, to sign thee with thy name ?

II.



ALL woes of all men sat upon thy soul
And all their wrongs were heavy on thy head;
With all their wounds thy heart was pierced
and bled.

And in thy spirit as in a mourning scroll
The world's huge sorrows were inscribed by roll,
All theirs on earth who serve and faint for bread,
All banished men's, all theirs in prison dead,
Thy love had heart and sword-hand for the whole.
"This was my day of glory," didst thou say,
When, by the scaffold thou hadst hope to climb
For thy faith's sake, they brought thee respite; "Nay,
I shall not die then, I have missed my day."
O hero, O our help, O head sublime,
Thy day shall be commensurate with time.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

SIBYL.



HIS is the glamour of the world antique :
The thyme-scents of Hymettus fill the air,
And in the grass narcissus-cups are fair.
The full brook wanders through the ferns to seek
The amber haunts of bees ; and on the peak
Of the soft hill, against the gold-marged sky,
She stands, a dream from out the days gone by.
Entreat her not. Indeed, she will not speak !
Her eyes are full of dreams ; and in her ears
There is the rustle of immortal wings ;
And ever and anon the slow breeze bears
The mystic murmur of the songs she sings.
Entreat her not : she sees thee not, nor hears
Aught but the sights and sounds of bygone springs.

JOHN PAYNE.

THE OLD BRIDGE AT FLORENCE.



ADDEO GADDI built me. I am old,
 Five centuries old. I plant my foot of stone
 Upon the Arno, as St. Michael's own
 Was planted on the dragon. Fold by fold
 Beneath me as it struggles, I behold
 Its glistening scales. Twice hath it overthrown
 My kindred and companions. Me alone
 It moveth not, but is by me controlled.
 I can remember when the Medici
 Were driven from Florence ; longer still ago
 The final wars of Ghibelline and Guelf.
 Florence adorns me with her jewelry ;
 And when I think that Michael Angelo
 Hath leaned on me, I glory in myself.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.



WHEN in the long-drawn avenues of Thought
I halt, and look before me and behind,
And seek what erst I all too little sought,
Some spot secure of rest, I do not find.
Retrace my steps I dare not, lest each nook
I late rejected should reject me now,
And sweetest arbours, restlessly forsook,
No more be prone their leafage to allow.
So to the untrod distance do I strain,
Which seemeth ever further to extend ;
Desiring oft, in irritable pain,
Premature sleep would bring that settled End,
When I shall know it all, or else forget
This far too little which for more doth fret.

ALFRED AUSTIN.

HIGHLAND SOLITUDE.



I N the lone glen the silver lake doth sleep ;
Sleeps the white cloud upon the sheer black hill :
All moorland sounds a solemn silence keep ;
I only hear the tiny trickling rill
'Neath the red moss. Athwart the dim grey pall,
That veils the day, a dusky fowl may fly ;
But, on this bleak brown moor, if thou shalt call
For men, a spirit will sooner make reply.
Come hither, thou whose agile mind doth flit
From talk to talk, and tempt the pensive mood.
Converse with men makes sharp the glittering wit,
But God to man doth speak in solitude.
Come, sit thee down upon this old grey stone ;
Men learn to think, and feel, and pray, alone.

JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

DANTE.



POET, whose unscarr'd feet have trodden Hell,
By what grim path and dread environing
Of fire could'st thou that dauntless footstep
bring
And plant it firm amid the dolorous cell
Of darkness where perpetually dwell
The spirits cursed beyond imagining?
Or else is thine a visionary wing,
And all thy terror but a tale to tell?
Neither and both, thou seeker! I have been
No wilder path than thou thyself dost go,
Close mask'd in an impenetrable screen,
Which having rent I gaze around, and know
What tragic wastes of gloom, before unseen,
Curtain the soul that strives and sins below.

RICHARD GARNETT.

BEN MUICDHUI.



'ER broad Muicdhui sweeps the keen cold blast,
Far whirrs the snow-bred, white-winged
ptarmigan,

Sheer sink the cliffs to dark Loch Etagan,
And all the hill with shattered rock lies waste.
Here brew ship-founding storms their force divine,
Here gush the fountains of wild-flooding rivers ;
Here the strong thunder frames the bolt that shivers
The giant strength of the old twisted pine.
Yet, even here, on the bare waterless brow
Of granite ruin, I found a purple flower,
A delicate flower, as fair as aught, I trow,
That toys with zephyrs in my lady's bower.
So Nature blends her powers ; and he is wise
Who to his strength no gentlest grace denies.

JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

HAPPINESS.



SPLENDOUR amid glooms,—a sunny thread
Woven into a tapestry of cloud,—
A merry child a-playing with the shroud
That lies upon a breathless mother's bed,—
A garland on the front of one new-wed,
Trembling and weeping while her troth is vowed,—
A school-boy's laugh that rises light and loud
In licensed freedom from ungentle dread ;
These are ensamples of the Happiness,
For which our nature fits us ; more and less
Are parts of all things to the Mortal given,
Of Love, Joy, Truth, and Beauty. Perfect light
Would dazzle, not illuminate, our sight,—
From Earth it is enough to glimpse at Heaven.

RICHARD, LORD HOUGHTON.

THE NEW DAWN.



OO long unblest, too long unloved, we waited,
 Watching the sun-kiss'd flowers bloom and die ;
 Sad days were ours for sad the hours went by ;

Lone were the hearts for love by Love created :

As some poor bird, by cruel chance unmated,

Flits thro' the forest with a piteous cry,

So for some dear, loved soul, 'twas ours to sigh,—

Some kindred spirit to our own related.

You came at last ! you came,—glad voices singing

Chanted blithe welcome to a dawn so fair !

The night was past ; and in the morning there—

Lo, love new-born, and life from death upspringing !

Who could have thought that those long years were bringing

So blest an union to so fond a pair.

SAMUEL WADDINGTON.

SOUL AND BODY.



HERE wert thou, Soul, ere yet my body born
Becamethydwelling-place? Didstthouon earth,
Or in the clouds, await this body's birth?
Or by what chance upon that winter's morn
Didst thou this body find, a babe forlorn?
Didst thou in sorrow enter, or in mirth?
Or for a jest, perchance, to try its worth
Thou tookest flesh, ne'er from it to be torn?

Nay, Soul, I will not mock thee; well I know
Thou wert not on the earth, nor in the sky;
For with my body's growth thou too didst grow;
But with that body's death wilt thou too die?
I know not, and thou canst not tell me, so
In doubt we'll go together,—thou and I.

SAMUEL WADDINGTON.



—“bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells :
In truth the prison unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is :—”

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.



THE SONNET: ITS HISTORY AND COMPOSITION.



It has been suggested that a short note giving the history of the Sonnet up to the present time, and setting forth the rules which govern its composition, would form an useful and interesting appendix to the foregoing selection. We therefore add the few following pages, which we hope will be sufficient to give the reader a fairly clear and comprehensive view of what is the history of this very ancient form of verse.

A popular author, in a volume of miscellaneous essays published about thirty years ago, writes:—"In the domain of English poetry, there is a section to which justice has not been done: its quality is not held in very high repute, and the title to it is regarded as somewhat doubtful. I refer to that form of metrical composition which is

denominated the Sonnet. . . . While the sonnet is read, an *un-English* feeling is found to be creeping about the heart, and the fancy is filled unconsciously with thoughts of Petrarch and images of Laura and the Vaucluse. While its melody is falling on the ear, we are too often overtaken with a kind of misgiving that we are listening to the rich music of, indeed, our own mother-tongue, but tuned to a strange note ; that we hear its glorious words uttered through a foreign instrument. This is not as it should be."—On reading the above lines the conclusion which forces itself upon us is, that however true they might have been thirty years ago they are no longer true now, and that whatever may have been the views of the preceding generation as regards the sonnet being not suited to the genius of our Northern tongue, no one can for a moment doubt that the form has by this time become thoroughly naturalized, and acclimated to our insular severity. Indeed, to no section of English poetry has greater justice been done during the present century than to that of the sonnet ; and few have been the poets in the last fifty years that have not given us one or more examples of this form of verse. While of living authors of the first rank we only remember

one poet—Mr. Robert Browning—that has not, so far as we are aware, ventured to till this “scanty plot of ground :” Mr. Matthew Arnold, Mr. Rossetti, Mr. Swinburne, and Mr. Tennyson, have not only written many sonnets, but have written sonnets which future generations will probably recognize as some of the finest in our language, and worthy to be classed with those of Wordsworth and Shakspeare. Let us, however, leave these modern writers for a while and turn to the early history of the sonnet.

And first as regards its name we may observe that the derivation assigned to it by Henry Kirke White, who suggested that it was a modification of *sonnette*, a sheep-bell, cannot be received as correct, as there is little doubt that the derivation generally accepted gives the true meaning of the word, and that it is not to *sonnette*, but to *suono* or *sonetto*, a little sound or strain, that the term owes its origin. Moreover the name appears to be especially appropriate when we remember that the sonnet was, in its early days, usually accompanied, not by a dance, as the *ballata*, but by music, and was thus distinguished from the *canto* or *canzone* which was sung without any accompaniment. Hence Ugo Foscolo, in his essays written during

his residence at South Bank, Regent's Park, tells us that Petrarch, perhaps the finest of all sonneteers, 'poured forth his verses to the sound of his lute;' and Petrarch, we know, did not live until the sonnet, even in its more complex form, had already existed for many years. It is to be noted, however, that the words sung were the important matter, and not the musical accompaniment; the latter was intended simply to assist, and give emotional effect to the former—the words were not composed for the sake of the music, but the music for that of the words. As years rolled on the sonnet was still written, and although the poet no longer deemed it necessary to sing his compositions, or to accompany them with his lute, he still retained the title which had been adopted for this particular form of poem. In very few instances do we find the name misapplied, although Thomas Warton, when writing about the poet Gower's celebrated French ballades, refers to them under the double title of 'ballades or sonnets.' Ballades they were, but sonnets they certainly were not.

With reference to the country in which the sonnet was first composed, there is, to say the least of it, much un-

certainty, and we do not propose to dogmatize on the subject. Mr. Tomlinson, in his able and interesting volume on *The Sonnet and its Origin*, states that it appears probable that the great Italian masters received it from the Provençal poets ; Mr. Guest, in his *History of English Rhythms*, writes that it is said to have been invented by the Sicilians ; some authors have suggested that it was first written in Arabia, while others have been content to attribute the invention of it to the Italian Troubadours. Perhaps the best authorities we can refer to on the subject are the early Italian poets, and Dante and Petrarch state that the poetry of their own country had its birth in Sicily. Crescimbeni suggested many reasons for believing that the Latin forms of versification supplied the measure of the sonnet ; while as regards the number of the lines, Capel Lofft in his *Laura* observes that as the lyre for a long time consisted of fourteen strings, that fact probably suggested to the first sonneteer the number of lines of which his poem should consist. We fear that this ingenious supposition of Capel Lofft's is hardly one which we can accept, as among the shorter poems of both Latin and Greek authors are to be found many compositions of

this particular length. Thus Anacreon has left us several which may almost be described as unrhymed octosyllabic sonnets ; and Pindar not unfrequently made the strophes and antistrophes of his odes to consist of fourteen lines. If we turn to the earliest poems that may with any correctness be termed sonnets, namely, to those of the old Italian poets, Lodovico Vernaccia, and Piero delle Vigne, Chancellor of the Emperor Frederick II., we find that while they consist of fourteen lines, the rhymes are alternate, and are not therefore arranged after the manner of what has in modern years been termed the ‘legitimate’ sonnet, in which the first, fourth, fifth and eighth lines are made to rhyme together, and of which the following graceful poem by Hartley Coleridge may be given as an example:—

‘ NIGHT.

The crackling embers on the hearth are dead ;
The indoor note of industry is still ;
The latch is fast ; upon the window sill
The small birds wait not for their daily bread ;
The voiceless flowers—how quietly they shed
Their nightly odours ;—and the household rill
Murmurs continuous dulcet sounds that fill
The vacant expectation, and the dread

Of listening night. And haply now she sleeps ;
For all the garrulous noises of the air
Are hushed in peace ; the soft dew silent weeps,
Like hopeless lovers for a maid so fair—
Oh ! that I were the happy dream that creeps
To her soft heart, to find my image there.'

It has become the fashion of late to call sonnets irregular, or even incorrect, if the rhymes of the first eight lines are not arranged after the manner of the above ; yet the original sonnets were, as already stated, written with alternate rhymes, and it is not clear why we should consider the later form more correct than that which was used by the earliest sonneteers. After the alternate-rhymed sonnets, or quatorzains as they are now generally called, had been written for some time, the first 'legitimate' sonnet was composed by Fra Guittone d'Arezzo in the middle of the thirteenth century. As the following is by this poet, it may possibly have been the first (so-called) 'correct' sonnet ever written, and is therefore of interest on that account apart from its own intrinsic merits :—

'LA COSTANTE SPERANZA.

Gia mille volte quando Amor m'hai stretto
Io son corso per darmi ultima morte ;

Non possendo restare al aspro e forte
 Empio Dolor ch' io sento dentro al petto.
 Voi veder lo potete, qual dispetto
 Ha lo mio cor, e quanto à crudel sorte
 Ratto, son corso già, sino alle parte
 Dell' aspra morte, per cercar diletto.

Ma quando io son per gire dall' altra vita
 Vostra immensa Pietà me tiene, e dice,
 "Non affrettar l' immatura partita ;
 La verde Età, tua Fedelta, il disdice ;"
 E à restar di quà mi prega, e invita ;
 Si ch' io spera col tempo esser felice.'

(Translation.)

Ere now, a thousand times by Love distressed,
 I am constrained to do myself Death's wrong,
 Unable to withstand the rude and strong
 Unhallow'd grief I feel within my breast.
 Well can you see with what despite possessed
 My heart is moved ; and how I haste along,
 And fain by cruel fate would join the throng
 That line Death's shore, in search of joyful rest.

But when upon Life's utmost verge I stand
 Your boundless pity holds me back and cries,
 "Haste not your parting to that distant land ;
 Your youth, your faithfulness, rule otherwise."
 Thus while to stay you pray me and command,
 For me I hope bliss in the future lies.

It is somewhat singular that Arezzo, which would thus seem to have been the birthplace of the Guittonian sonnet, was also that of Mæcenæ, the first great patron of literature ; of Petrarch, the most productive of sonneteers ; of Michael Angelo ; and of Guido, the inventor of the Italian system of music :—a marvellous galaxy of great men for one little town to have produced, and we do not remember any other place of the size that can boast so illustrious a progeny. As regards the last-named of these, Capel Lofft surmised that the system of music invented by Guido d'Arezzo had suggested to Guittone two centuries later the form and harmony of the sonnet. This surmise Leigh Hunt treats somewhat cavalierly, as being hardly worthy of serious thought ; but when we remember that poetry in its early days was more closely connected with music than it is now, and when we further remember that the *rondeau* would appear to have originated with the composition in music entitled the *rondo*, we must confess that we think it possible that there may be some truth in Lofft's supposition. There is, however, a slight similarity between the sonnet and the ballade stave, with the last six lines added as the envoy.

But what is the composition of the sonnet as invented by Guittone and as now usually written by the poets who strictly follow his form? It is, as will be seen by the one above quoted, a poem of fourteen lines consisting of a major part, or octave, of eight lines, and a minor part, or sestet, of six lines; the major part being subdivided into two quatrains, or stanzas of four lines each; and the minor into two tercets, or stanzas of three lines each. The octave must contain but two rhymes, that is to say the first, fourth, fifth, and eighth lines must rhyme together, and the second, third, sixth, and seventh lines. The minor part must also have only two, or at most three rhymes. To assist the reader in clearly understanding what the composition of the Guittonian sonnet really is when it complies with these rules, we will quote one of Wordsworth's best known and most perfect sonnets, dividing it into its separate parts, so that the plan of the whole poem may be easily perceived.

‘LOSS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.’

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

This sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;
It moves us not.—Great God ! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea :
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.'

Such is the form of the sonnet, sometimes called the 'legitimate,' and sometimes the 'Italian,' or 'Petrarchan,' sonnet : but we would point out to our readers that it was written by Guittone many years before Petrarch adopted it as his model ; and as some of Petrarch's sonnets are not 'legitimate,' but are alternate-rhymed, it is manifestly more accurate to call it the 'Guittonian,' than the 'Petrarchan,' sonnet ; for otherwise we should make the strange discovery that some of Petrarch's sonnets are not 'Petrarchan.' It also is scarcely correct to call it the 'Italian' sonnet, because the earliest Italian sonnets we know of were alternate-rhymed, and from 1250 up to the present century these so-called 'irregular' sonnets have been written as well as the 'Guittonian' sonnets,

by the poets of Italy. Moreover, the variations to be found in the Italian poets, such as the *sonetto caudato*, the *sonetto in rondo*, &c., to which we shall presently refer, are almost numberless; and it seems illogical to give the title of 'the Italian sonnet' to one variation, and to refuse it to the rest. If the title were to be given to any, we should be inclined to give it to the form in which the rhymes of the octave run a, b, a, b, a, b, a, b, as being the original Italian sonnet so far as we are aware. Sir Philip Sidney and the Earl of Surrey have left us specimens of this form of sonnet, but it has been almost entirely discarded by English poets since their date, although we find the following beautiful example among Mr. Rossetti's poems :—¹

' WILLOWWOOD. III.

O ye, all ye that walk in Willowwood,
 That walk with hollow faces burning white;
 What fathom-depth of soul-struck widowhood,
 What long, what longer hours, one lifelong night,
 Ere ye again, who so in vain have wooed
 Your last hope lost, who so in vain invite
 Your lips to that their unforgotten food,
 Ere ye, ere ye again shall see the light!

¹ See also pp. 35 and 153.

Alas ! the bitter banks in Willowwood,
With tear-spurge wan, with blood-wort burning red :
Alas ! if ever such a pillow could
Steep deep the soul in sleep till she were dead,—
Better all life forget her than this thing,
That Willowwood should hold her wandering !'

(The above forms part of a series of four sonnets entitled 'Willowwood,' and the reader will do well to peruse the other three if by any chance they are unknown to him, as the one here quoted is barely intelligible without the others.)

It will have already been observed that we are disposed to admit as equally correct many variations of the form of the Sonnet, because we fail to perceive any reason why the form used by either Spenser or Shakspeare should not be deemed as correct as that used by Fra Guittone, seeing that none of them is the form in which, so far as we are aware, the Sonnet was originally written. At the same time no one would probably deny that the Guittonian variation is the best, and few poets, after once having become accustomed to it, ever return to the looser construction and less frequent rhymes of the other forms in which the Sonnet has been written.

The preceding remarks have dealt mainly with the arrangement of the rhymes in the octave or first eight lines, and we shall now describe briefly what are the chief variations as regards the arrangement of the rhymes in the sestet or minor part of the Sonnet. In the three examples already given by Wordsworth, Hartley Coleridge, and Fra Guittone respectively, it will be noticed that the arrangement is the same, and that the rhymes in the last six lines are alternate, viz. a, b, a, b, a, b. About one-third of Petrarch's sonnets, and most of Ariosto's, are written in this form; but the arrangement which has been, perhaps, chiefly adopted by the Italian poets, is that in which the rhymes of the sestet run a, b, c, a, b, c, and of which many examples will be found in the foregoing selection, as for instance Mr. Matthew Arnold's 'Quiet Work,' 'Austerity of Poetry,' 'Rachel, (I.)' &c. . . . A third variation much used by Petrarch arranges the rhymes a, b, c, b, a, c; and amongst other arrangements he occasionally used the one in which the rhymes run a, b, c, b, c, a—which is the order adopted in Mrs. Fanny Kemble's sonnet beginning 'BlaspHEME not thou thy sacred life, nor turn,' which will be found at page 21 of this volume.

Amongst the French poets there exists a practice of beginning the sestet with a couplet, and Mr. Swinburne has adopted this form in his sonnet entitled 'In San Lorenzo';— 'The Source of Fame,' by Sir Philip Sidney, follows the same arrangement, as also do some of Wordsworth's sonnets. We only remember one instance in which the first three lines of the sestet are made to rhyme together, and that is in a sonnet by Boileau : it is not a form which we should recommend to future sonnet-writers. As regards the practice of ending the sestet with a couplet, we all know how much it has been condemned, and how frequently it has been used by English sonneteers. For our part we do not propose to condemn or defend either this, or that other equally heretical practice of closing the sonnet with an Alexandrine ; but we will venture to quote an example of this latter irregularity in order to show the reader how little it interferes with the beauty of the poem if skilfully introduced. The example is taken from a volume of poems entitled *Ionica*, which has been much and deservedly admired :—

'MOON-SET.

Sweet moon, twice rounded in a blithe July,
 Once down a wandering English stream thou leddest
 My lonely boat ; swans gleamed around ; the sky
 Throbbled overhead with meteors : now thou sheddest
 Faint radiance on a cold Arvernian plain,
 Where I, far severed from that youthful crew,
 Far from the gay disguise thy witcheries threw
 On wave and dripping oar, still own thy reign,
 Travelling with thee through many a sleepless hour.
 Now shrink, like my weak will : a sterner power
 Empurpleth yonder hills beneath thee piled,
 Hills, where Cæsarian sovereignty was won
 On high basaltic levels blood-defiled,
 The Druid moonlight quenched beneath the Roman sun.'

This sonnet reminds us that Keats attempted to invent an entirely new and original form of his own, and that a specimen of the variation he composed is to be found in one of his letters to his brother. We doubt whether it can be considered an improvement on the Guittonian form, and apparently he himself did not think it was, as he wrote no more than this one representative of his invention. We may mention that his sonnet 'The Human Seasons' has an unusual ending, that of a couplet with dissyllabic rhymes :—

‘ He has his Winter, too, of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.’

His best sonnet is, however, in our judgment, that ‘ On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer,’ which is one of the very highest order of excellence.

Of the more marked deviations from the regular form, the *sonetto caudato*, or tailed sonnet, appears to have been one of the earliest, and examples of it are to be found amongst the poems of Ariosto, Tasso, Berni, Grazzini, and other Italian poets. It consists of the ordinary fourteen-lined sonnet with a ‘tail’ of three or more lines added at the end, and was chiefly used for satirical and personal attacks, and for comic or burlesque subjects, such as delighted Berni, the leader of this school of poetry. In English literature we have but two examples of this very worthless form of verse—one being by Milton, and entitled, ‘ On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament ’; the other by Egerton Webbe, and addressed to a Fog.

Another innovation consisted in the reduction of the number of syllables of which the lines were composed from ten to eight, and so giving us the octosyllabic sonnet

of which Mr. Payne's 'Love's Epitaph' (see page 38) is a pleasing example. This form, while losing much of the grave and stately movement of the ordinary sonnet, has nevertheless a grace and melody of its own, which may possibly recommend it to future sonnetters. It probably would be found a very suitable measure in which to write the *Sonnetto in Rondo*, a variation adopted by Brunamonti in his Sonnet on the Nativity, which commences,—

‘O Dolci rimembranze, o lieto Giorno!’

and concludes with these words transposed :—

‘O lieto Giorno, o dolci Rimembranze!’

This terminal repetition of the opening words gives an unity and lyric completeness which greatly add to the beauty of the poem.

Among other variations used by the Italian poets we must mention the *retrograde* sonnets, which can be read backwards as well as forwards; *iterating* sonnets; *mute* sonnets, with monosyllabic rhymes; and *duodenary*, with trisyllabic, or, as the Italians term them, ‘sliding’ or ‘sdrucchioli’ rhymes.

To the French poet Olivier de Magny we are indebted for another form of composition, the *dialogue* sonnet.

To this we would call especial attention on account of the following very fine example of it by Mr. E. W. Gosse, published in his *New Poems* :—

‘ALCYONE.

PHŒBUS.

What voice is this that wails above the deep?

ALCYONE.

A wife's, that mourns her fate and loveless days.

PHŒBUS.

What love lies buried in these water-ways?

ALCYONE.

A husband's, hurried to eternal sleep,

PHŒBUS.

Cease, O beloved, cease to wail and weep!

ALCYONE.

Wherefore?

PHŒBUS.

The waters in a fiery blaze
Proclaim the godhead of my healing rays.

ALCYONE.

No god can sow where fate hath stood to reap.

PHŒBUS.

Hold, wringing hands! Cease, piteous tears, to fall!

ALCYONE.

But grief must rain and glut the passionate sea.

PHŒBUS.

Thou shalt forget this ocean and thy wrong,
And I will bless the dead, though past recall.

ALCYONE.

What canst thou give to me or him in me?

PHŒBUS.

A name in story, and a light in song.'

This poem we feel assured would have delighted Walter Savage Landor, and we can imagine him speaking of it in the terms he used with reference to Thomas Russell's *Philoctetes*,—'a sonnet on Alcyone by Mr. Gosse, which would authorise him to join the shades of Sophocles and Euripides.' It is, we believe, the first *dialogue* sonnet that has been written in English.

Such are the principal variations which have been made in the form of the Sonnet with the exception of those used by Spenser and Shakspeare, to which we shall presently refer. We will now mention a few of the chief sonneteers, and so give a brief sketch of the Sonnet during the last six centuries, that is to say from about 1260, the date when Fra Guittone flourished.

And first we may mention Enzo, King of Sardinia, whose sonnet on 'The Fitness of Seasons' is more sensible than the large majority of Italian sonnets, which

generally sing the praises of some fair lady or other, in a somewhat exhaustive and extravagant fashion. Enzo was a contemporary of Fra Guittone, and was followed by the sweet and melodious Cino, who was succeeded by the greatest of all Italian poets, Dante Alighieri. There are, we believe, about forty sonnets known to have been written by Dante, and some of them are held to be superior to those of Petrarch, who wrote upwards of three hundred. Michael Angelo is another of Italy's greatest sonneteers, and Mr. J. A. Symonds has given us translations of his compositions in the sonnet form. Ariosto, the two Tassos, Vittoria Colonna, Lorenzo de' Medici, Cecco Angioliere of Siena, Giusto de Conti, and the Portuguese poet Camoens, are amongst the writers who have been especially successful as sonneteers ; while of the French poets we may mention Clement Marot, and Mellin de Saint-Gelais, who certainly wrote sonnets before Du Bellay, although Sainte-Beuve gives the latter the credit of having introduced the sonnet into France,—

‘ Du Bellay, le premier, l’apporta de Florence.’

Also we should refer to Ronsard, Voiture, Corneille, and Boileau ; but, indeed, there have been few French poets

who have not also been sonneteers, as may be seen from the excellent *Livre des Sonnets* of Lemerre. In England the earliest sonnets were written by Sir Thomas Wyatt, and his friend the Earl of Surrey, and it is to the former of these that we owe the introduction into English literature of another exotic form, the 'rondeau,' nine examples of which are to be found amongst his poems. Perhaps we ought rather to say that Sir Thomas Wyatt *failed* to introduce the form, and that it was not until Mr. Austin Dobson, three centuries later, recently set in motion the composition of the forms of verse so much used by the French poets, that the rondeau has been really introduced, and we may almost say, naturalized in this country. It is possible that these so-called French forms, the 'Chant Royal,' 'Ballade,' 'Rondel,' 'Rondeau,' &c., had the same origin as the 'Sonnet,' and that they were all introduced into Sicily and other parts of Europe by the Arabians during the ninth century.

After the Earl of Surrey the next English sonneteer was Sir Philip Sidney, whose sonnets we prefer to those of his two predecessors, although we weary of his continued laudation of the beautiful Stella. His contemporary,

Edmund Spenser, entitled his series of sonnets *Amoretti*, of which the best is, perhaps, 'Willing Bondage.' The form in which they are written was invented by Spenser, and consists of three quatrains and a couplet, the quatrains being linked together by making the first and third lines of each succeeding quatrain rhyme with the second and fourth lines of the preceding one : thus the rhymes run a, b, a, b, b, c, b, c, c, d, c, d, e, e,—and are five in number, as in the majority of Petrarch's sonnets ; while those of Shakspeare, consisting of three unlinked quatrains and a couplet, contain seven rhymes, and are therefore as regards structure of the most loose and flimsy description. Yet the two finest sonneteers that England has produced are Wordsworth and Shakspeare, and the sonnets of the latter clearly prove that the Guittonian form, although the most compact and best, cannot claim a monopoly as regards the production of fine sonnets. We agree with the criticism of Coleridge, who wrote respecting Shakspeare's sonnets,—“They are characterized by boundless fertility and laboured condensation of thought, with perfection of sweetness in rhyme and metre.” Passing over the sonneteers Samuel Daniel, Michael Drayton, Donne,

George Herbert, and Drummond of Hawthornden,—all of whom are excellent in their way and worthy to be ranked next after the few poets that form the first rank of sonnet-writers,—we now come to John Milton. It will be remembered that Dr. Johnson remarked respecting Milton's sonnets that 'three of them were not bad'; and he told Hannah More that 'Milton was a genius that could hew a Colossus out of a rock, but could not carve heads on cherry-stones.' He would, perhaps, be a bold man who said this now, and yet we, for our part, should be inclined to rank Milton as a sonneteer below both Shakspeare and Wordsworth. The number of his sonnets is only eighteen, and of these the best is the one 'On the Late Massacre in Piemont,' but this is not without faults, although unquestionably a fine sonnet. The rhymes in the octave are monotonous, the same vowel sound closing all the lines in the two quatrains; and there is no pause or division at the end of the major part of the sonnet. Hallam observes that Milton's 'sonnets are, indeed, unequal; the expression is sometimes harsh, and sometimes obscure, sometimes too much of pedantic allusion interferes with the sentiment, nor am I reconciled to his fre-

quent deviations from the best Italian structure.' True it is that the sonnets of Milton do not fill one with rapture and delight as do some of Wordsworth's : the sonnet 'On Westminster Bridge,' beginning,—

'Earth has not anything to show more fair ;
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :—

Or the one,—

'It is a beauteous evening, calm and free ;
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration ;—

Or again,—

'Surprised by joy—impatient as the wind
I turned to share the transport—Oh ! with whom
But Thee, deep-buried in the silent tomb,—

These, these are indeed beautiful, and justify the criticism of Sir Henry Taylor, that Wordsworth's sonnets 'are highly-finished compositions, distinguished, as regards the diction, only by an aptitude which can hardly fail to be approved, whatever may be the particular taste of the reader.' There is in them a combination of strength and simplicity, of truth and earnestness, and a majesty both of thought and diction, that give them a pre-eminence over those of any other writer.

Byron, Shelley, and Keats wrote but few sonnets, yet each of them has left at least one example worthy to be ranked among the best,—that by Byron *On the Castle of Chillon*, Shelley's *Ozymandias*, and the one by Keats already referred to, *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*. The latter poet wrote, however, other sonnets which should be mentioned, as for instance his *Last Sonnet*, and the one beginning—

‘The day is gone, and all its sweets are gone!’

We may state that some critics have considered that his *Last Sonnet* is his best, and superior to the one *On Chapman's Homer*: we would only point out that the latter is a Guittonian, and the former a Shakspearian sonnet ending with a couplet,—

‘Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.’

Shelley's sonnets are irregular as regards the arrangement of the rhymes; and Lord Byron has given a different rhyme to his sixth and seventh, from that of his second and third lines, in the sonnet *On Chillon*.

There are two other poets who should be noticed as

having been especially successful as regards their sonnets : we refer to Mrs. Browning and Hartley Coleridge. The former of these has received so much praise, and her sonnets are so well known, that it is unnecessary for us to eulogize them ; but such is not the case as regards Hartley Coleridge's sonnets. With the exception of Wordsworth, at whose feet he sat, we do not remember any English poet whose sonnets have given us so much delight as have these of Hartley Coleridge. A recent writer in the "Contemporary Review" speaks of him as having 'promised so much and performed so little,'—but surely to have composed nearly two hundred sonnets, of which it can be said with truth that some of them are to be classed amongst the most beautiful that the world has produced, is no small performance ! We have already quoted his sonnet on *Night*, and we think the following is equally admirable :—

TO A FRIEND.

' When we were idlers with the loitering rills,
The need of human love we little noted :
Our love was Nature ; and the peace that floated
On the white mist, and dwelt upon the hills,

To sweet accord subdued our wayward wills :
 One soul was ours, one mind, one heart devoted
 That wisely doating asked not why it doated,
 And ours the unknown joy, which knowing kills.
 But now I find how dear thou wert to me ;
 That man is more than half of Nature's treasure,
 Of that fair beauty which no eye can see,
 Of that sweet music which no ear can measure ;
 And now the streams may sing for others' pleasure,
 The hills sleep on in their eternity.'

To have written such a sonnet as this is of itself no small performance, and he wrote many others but little, if at all, inferior to it. Take for instance the one on *Prayer*, with the final couplet,—

' But if for any wish thou darest not pray,
 Then pray to God to cast that wish away.'

Or the one which Mr. Henry Reed describes as being of exquisite grace, and which begins :

' Whither is gone the wisdom and the beauty
 That ancient sages scattered with the notes
 Of thought-suggesting lyres?'

Or again the one on Psalm xci. :—

' Where is that secret place of the Most High?
 And who is He? Where shall we look for Him
 That dwelleth there?'

There are few lovers of poetry who do not know his sonnets on 'Joy in Sorrow,' 'The First Man,' 'Homer,' and 'To a Lofty Beauty,' and we hope that what we have here written will cause others to become acquainted with them.

Among other noteworthy sonnets and sonneteers, mention should be made of Cowper's 'To Mary Unwin,' Thomas Gray's 'On the Death of Richard West,' and Blanco White's 'Night and Death.' The last named, Coleridge considered the best English sonnet, and Leigh Hunt wrote respecting it : 'In point of thought this sonnet stands supreme, perhaps above all in any language.' But Blanco White, Coleridge, and Leigh Hunt all belonged for a time to the Unitarian denomination ; and although the sonnet is a good one in many respects, it has the defect that it tries to draw an analogy where perhaps no analogy exists,—between life and day,—night and death. There may, or may not, be a resemblance between night and death, but while the Christian believes that the day, the light of the soul, continues after death, the Buddhist holds that as soon as the life of the saint is ended total and eternal darkness follows, and not a star-illuminated night such as Blanco White refers to.

Lord Thurlow's sonnet 'To a Water Bird' has been praised by Archbishop Trench as being one of stately and thoughtful beauty ; and that already referred to by Thomas Russell on Philoctetes ('Supposed To Be Written at Lemnos') is, indeed, admirable.

The French poet Boileau observed that a sonnet without a fault is alone worth a long poem, yet there have been opponents of this form of verse almost from the time when Fra Guittone first wrote it, and Menzini speaks of those who compared it to the bed of Procrustes, alleging that a fixed measure of fourteen lines would be found either too long, or too short, for almost every subject under the sun. And, perhaps, there may be some even now who will be inclined to ask what are the advantages of a prescribed form of this description, which may neither be curtailed, nor increased in length. We would reply that one advantage obtained is that it compels the poet to be concise, and to condense his thoughts into a small compass, and, as a living sonneteer has pointed out, oftentimes a poem, which, except for the difficulties and restraints of the sonnet, would have been but a loose nebulous vapour, has, through this agency, been compressed and rounded into a star.

But it were a sufficient answer to all such enquirers to point to the foregoing selection, for “by their fruits ye shall know them ;” and no form of verse, no description of poetic composition, has yielded a richer harvest than the Sonnet.

It may, perhaps, interest the collectors of literary curiosities to learn that no less than 3,000 livres is said to have been given by Richelieu to the poet Achillini for the latter’s sonnet on the taking of La Rochelle ; and that the still larger sum of 30,000 livres was presented by Henry IV. to Philippe Desportes for the sonnet of *Diane and Hippolyte*.

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